

Antecedents and Outcomes of Dynamic Capabilities: The Effect of Structure

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Abstract

In the time of globalization and constantly increasing velocity, firms face new challenges. One way for firms to address these challenges is dynamic capabilities. This stream of research has made important advances since the seminal paper of Teece, Pisano and Shuen (1997) over the last fifteen years. The paper examines these advances investigating the most influential articles of both conceptual and empirical nature. At the core of this study is the analysis of how organizational structure affects dynamic capabilities. Organizational structure is an important but underplayed area within the literature of dynamic capabilities. Contradictory claims, found in literature sources, concerning the effect of organizational structure on dynamic capabilities are noted in this article. The origins for the opposing findings are explored. This analysis is used to highlight fundamental deficits of the stream of dynamic capability research. Future research directions that could contribute to resolving the identified drawbacks are suggested.

Keywords: dynamic capabilities, competitive advantage, organizational structure, construct definition.

Introduction

The rise of information technology and an ascending degree of globalization has led to increasingly volatile environments and intensification of competition. The pace of business is constantly accelerating. The roots of economics and management theory are based on the neoclassical model and largely take a static view on competition. However, a static perspective loses explanatory and prescriptive value in more dynamic settings. A number of scholars (e.g. Cyert and March, 1963; Nelson and Winter, 1982; Teece, Pisano and Shuen, 1997) have recognized this tension between theory and economic reality and started developing the field of competitive dynamics which has hugely gained importance within the last two decades.

Within the field of strategic management, the second shift from an industrial organization view to a resource-based perspective has facilitated the development of a dynamic view of the firm. The industrial organization perspective starts with an industry-level analysis and advises firms to position according to their focus on costs, quality, or a niche (Porter, 1980). This view has been criticized for neglecting the proactive and co-evolutionary abilities of firms and for being environmentally deterministic. It underplays the role of management in fostering innovation and changing respectively creating markets (Schumpeter, 1934; Kirzner, 1973). In response to such externally focused ideas, Wernerfeldt (1984) and Peteraf (1993) have argued towards a resource-based view of the firm. This theory defines a firm as ‘a bundle of resources’ (Barney, 1991). Accordingly, valuable, unique, and difficult-to-replicate asset configurations and combinations form the basis for (sustained) competitive advantage. Teece, Pisano and Shuen (1997) discuss how the resource and capability endowment of firms can purposefully change. In changing environments, they argue, being ahead of competitors in creating co-specialized and complementary assets possibly in dispersed geographical areas, making better and more timely decisions, and understanding technological change is core to gain (sustained) competitive advantage. The key in achieving such a superior position of moving faster than others is the possession of dynamic capabilities. Dynamic capabilities are the ‘capacity of a firm to purposefully change’ (Helfat et al., 2007). Essentially, the dynamic capability view is designed to help answer the ultimate question of strategic management: how can firms gain (sustainable) competitive advantage. However, the actual antecedents of dynamic capabilities remain subject to intense academic discussions.

In this study, the issue of how organizational structure affects dynamic capabilities is investigated. More specifically, the *aim* of this paper is to contribute to the debate regarding the antecedents of dynamic capabilities by highlighting and contextualizing the effects of organizational structure on dynamic capabilities. The effect

of structure on dynamic capabilities is of particular interest, since organizational structure is a traditionally important topic in organizational theory and strategic management (e.g. Barnard, 1938; Chandler, 1962). However, there is a dearth of research within the literature of dynamic capabilities that explicitly addresses the present research question. Most studies within the field of dynamic capabilities treat organizational structure implicitly, if at all. Moreover, the authors identify contradictory claims concerning the effects of structure on dynamic capabilities in the literature. The analysis presented in this paper implies that the problems which produce mixed findings, concerning the effect of structure on dynamic capabilities, may not be unique to these fields, but have their origin in more fundamental deficiencies of research on dynamic capabilities and their theoretical foundations.

Dynamic capabilities suffer from a range of 'bad press'. Scholars have labeled them as tautological, vague, mysterious, or elusive (for an overview see Barreto, 2010). The core of the confusion is a lack of understanding of theoretical roots and research traditions within the field. As a result, the findings of this study show mixed evidence for the effect of structure on dynamic capabilities.

The research methodology is oriented towards a number of elements. The investigation draws on the two most influential literature reviews about research on dynamic capabilities from Zahra et al. (2006) and Barreto (2010) to identify the themes of interest for this investigation. In addition, the authors discuss the most influential work on dynamic capabilities and analyze its contribution toward the development of the field and for providing input to the debate on structure. The analysis of structure is guided by three dimensions: formalization, centralization, and specialization. For each dimension, not only contradictory claims are identified, but also the origins of the opposing findings are revealed. The reasons for the opposing findings are in many cases not unique to the effect of organizational structure on dynamic capabilities, but are of a more general nature.

The rest of the paper is organized as follows. First, a brief critical overview of the conceptual and empirical progress within the field of dynamic capabilities is provided. Then, the effect of structure on dynamic capabilities is analyzed and main conceptual findings presented. Finally, the implications for other fields and further research are discussed.

1. Foundations of dynamic capabilities: conceptual papers

Since the emergence of the dynamic capability view, significant progress has been made. A range of areas of particular importance within the dynamic capability research has been identified during the last 15 years. Notwithstanding this progress, dynamic capabilities have triggered some confusion in the scholarly community (e.g. Barreto, 2010). In this section, papers that have contributed to resolving some of the nebulosity occasionally associated with dynamic capabilities are briefly introduced.

The criticism around the debate of dynamic capabilities has been responded to by its supporters. The

theoretical basis of dynamic capabilities has been clarified by a number of scholars. Particularly, two kinds of contributions have been made (Teece et al., 1997; Zollo and Winter, 2002; Winter, 2003; Teece, 2007):

- Recent work gives meaning to the concept, embeds and relates it to different research streams, and offers interpretations that potentially advance the understanding conceptual clarity and empirical assessment of dynamic capabilities.
- Closely related, the conceptual work on dynamic capabilities identifies antecedents and outcomes of dynamic capabilities and points out weaknesses in the current debate around the construct.

Kogut and Zander (1992) initiate a debate that highlights learning and knowledge-based arguments as central for developing superior capabilities. In this vein, Zollo and Winter (2002) articulate an evolutionary framework which points out mechanisms that are the distinguishing features of such capabilities, explain how they develop and under what circumstances they evolve. Learning is a key feature of dynamic capabilities. Three classes, i.e. zero-, first-, and second order capabilities are proposed to describe the potential for dynamic capabilities to alter firm's resource base (Winter, 2003). Dynamic capabilities are identified as second order capabilities, or meta-capabilities (Ambrosini and Bowman, 2009). This classification has contributed to a higher acceptance of the dynamic capability view as it connects closely to the existing research tradition and simultaneously offers empirical accessibility of the construct. Dynamic capabilities are deeply rooted in learning and evolutionary schools.

For this study, recognizing this conceptualization of dynamic capabilities is important. Many of the arguments on the effect of structure on dynamic capabilities trace back to arguments within this line of thoughts.

Further work on dynamic capabilities examines the mechanisms of dynamic capabilities deployment. Helfat and Peteraf (2003) introduce the capability lifecycle. In their paper, they suggest paths that capabilities can take within their lifetime and propose mechanisms for these paths. In this line, Lavie (2006) identifies three distinct mechanisms that alter firm's capability deployment. Makadok (2001) shows under which circumstances capability-building is of value for a firm. Understanding the cost-benefit dimension of dynamic capabilities provides an important contribution to the literature stream.

Understanding how dynamic capabilities are deployed is a crucial element of understanding the effect of structure on dynamic capabilities. One contribution of the dynamic capability view is that it recognizes that there is no single best way to structure an organization. Instead, organization structure becomes a much more flexible, changing, and contextual system than traditionally theorized.

The importance of understanding external factors that influence the development and maintenance and outcomes of dynamic capabilities has triggered further studies. In their review, Zahra et al. (2006) find unclear and conflicting research concerning a number of contingencies of dynamic capability deployment. More explicitly, they

name market dynamism, firm age, and firm's knowledge base and skills. In addition, they speculate about the performance indications of dynamic capabilities in different settings. Schreyögg and Kliesch (2007) elaborate that these concerns may have important implications. A routine-based concept of change leads to the conceptual implosion of routines which are based on the stability of patterns. Teece (2007) calls for more work on the microfoundations of dynamic capabilities to resolve these issues.

Extensive debate about the nature of dynamic capabilities has led to the identification of two seemingly similar, but different conceptualizations of dynamic capabilities. Started by Schreyögg and Kliesch (2007) and taken forward by DiStefano et al. (2010), these authors identify two distinct conceptualizations within the two most cited seminal papers by Teece et al. (1997) and Eisenhardt and Martin (2000). Bibliographic analysis reveals that the two papers have triggered two research streams with little overlap (despite the efforts of Helfat et al. (2007) to unify this area of research). This discovery could be an explanation as to (1) why the debate has been couched around fundamental issues and (2) why there is conflicting information about the antecedents of dynamic capabilities.

These ideas have a direct impact upon understanding the effect of structure on dynamic capabilities. If the two research streams comprehensively explain the contradictory findings of organizational structure on dynamic capabilities, future research could significantly advance its clarity by obeying the roots of only one of those streams. However, as presented later, there is very little agreement even within a more popular conceptualization triggered by the work of Teece et al. (1997). Instead, researchers belonging to the same stream of research not only fail to provide a clearly identified set of antecedents of dynamic capabilities, but also disagree about their effects on the building, possession, maintenance, and decline of dynamic capabilities. The next section of the article discusses one possibility for this disagreement, examining the empirical evidence for dynamic capabilities and their effects.

2. Foundations of dynamic capabilities: empirical papers

By now, there is a solid number of empirical studies that deploy the dynamic capability view. The selected literature for this section is largely balanced between quantitative and qualitative work and incorporates a range of methodological approaches that have impact on the dynamic capability research. The studies have been carried out in a range of industries, they use a number of approaches, and certainly also vary in their rigor.

For the purpose of this study, the selected papers are classified into the following:

- 1) Work that looks at different levels on which dynamic capabilities apply;
- 2) Work that verifies assumptions of the dynamic capability framework and the role of managers;

- 3) Their performance implications, respectively, their rent creating mechanisms.

Dynamic capability researchers show little agreement on the level at which dynamic capabilities apply. A number of studies suggest that dynamic capabilities are a multi-level construct. Rothaermel and Hess (2007) investigate dynamic capabilities on three levels: the individual level, the firm level, and the network level. In their study, they find evidence that star-scientists only contribute to superior organizational outcomes if the organizational setting stimulates their individual capabilities. In other words, star-scientists degrade to average in the wrong organization. Laamanen and Wallin (2009) suggest, the tactical, operative, and strategic level is managed by different hierarchical levels responsible for routines, capabilities, and capability portfolios. They pursue the first empirical investigation on the idea of capability hierarchies (Gavetti, 2005). Other researchers believe in the corporate effect of dynamic capabilities (Adner and Helfat, 2003). For them, it remains unclear whether and how dynamic capabilities are hierarchically distributed (Helfat and Winter, 2011). Many studies share the assumption that dynamic capabilities exist on a firm-, respectively, business-unit level. Danneels (2002, 2008, 2011) finds compelling results when looking at antecedents on the business level. Ambrosini and Bowman (2009) support this claim when discussing contingencies and different levels of dynamic capabilities. Sirmon and Hitt (2009) find positive performance implications of aligned resource investment and capability deployment which also supports the view that the firm level is relevant for dynamic capabilities. Overall, while there is some debate about the relevance of some levels of inquiries, there is evidence that dynamic capabilities are a multi-level construct and that the firm-level plays an important role in understanding dynamic capabilities.

These findings reveal important implications for the question of the effect of organizational structure on dynamic capabilities. Research on organizational structure regularly starts from the firm-level perspective. However, the structure might not be evenly distributed within a corporation, business unit or even project; besides, little is known about interactions between levels based on the existing or changing structures. Clarifying the level of analysis is the first step towards a more comprehensive research agenda around dynamic capabilities.

Managers have become a core of the debate in dynamic capability research. The importance of managers is illustrated by two elements. First, understanding future demands and the resulting opportunities is essential to the dynamic adaptation process. Dynamic capabilities reflect managers' effort and ability to look into the future and seize potential benefits. In their study, Agarwal and Seelen (2009) show the benefits of 'collaboration, learning and the management of creative ideas' as higher-order capabilities. Teece and Augier (2009) describe the entrepreneurial skills of managers as 'the heart of dynamic capabilities'. Laamanen and Wallin (2009) find evidence that the ability to direct capabilities and capability portfolios are central to firm's ability to adapt to changing environments. Tripsas

(2000) as well as Danneels (2011) trace the failure of firms back to managerial malfunctioning.

Second, many scholars call for researching cognitive and affective elements of dynamic capabilities (Gavetti, 2005; Hodgkinson and Healey, 2011). The actions taken to foresee future developments to seize them and to transform the firm accordingly are an important element for the operationalization of dynamic capabilities.

This area of inquiry triggers interesting questions of how structure plays into the debate. One of the primary contributions of the dynamic capability view is the clarification of the pivotal role of management. Little research has paid attention to the structures, necessary to foster entrepreneurial management between different levels of the firm, to how structure restricts or enables communication and under what circumstances it contributes to long-term firm survival.

The performance implications of dynamic capabilities have triggered a rich debate. While they are assumed to be costly (Winter, 2003), the benefits of dynamic capabilities may outweigh their costs. Zahra et al. (2006) argue that dynamic capabilities are only beneficial in dynamic environments. A number of studies find evidence for this argument (Agarwal and Seelen, 2009; Drnevich and Kriauciunas, 2011). Other studies cannot exclude that dynamic capabilities are also beneficial in more stable environments or can be detrimental in stable and dynamic environments (Makadok, 2001; Danneels, 2012). There is no clear agreement about the performance implications of dynamic capabilities in different environments and contexts.

3. Structure and dynamic capabilities

While traditional research on organic and mechanistic structures suggest that volatile environments are best addressed by organic structures, the dynamic capability view challenges this proposition. The dynamic capability view suggests a more complex relationship between structure and dynamic capability including characteristics that allow accounting for contextual specifications.

Organization structure describes the policies and activities within an organization which prescribe and restrict the behavior of its members. While scientific literature has identified a large number of elements that contribute to organization structure, the discussion within this study is limited to the three elements with the most longstanding research tradition: formalization, centralization, and specialization (Dalton et al., 1980). This choice is justified as it finds parallels in the discussion around mechanistic and organic structure and also as it reflects the availability of good empirical evidence.

The dynamic capability view pays tribute to the conclusion that there is no single superior way of organizing a firm under all contingencies (Arndt, 2011). While it is not the first to recognize it, it is abundantly clear under this view that a simple formula for firm's structural configuration offers no adequate reflection of what is needed to survive in volatile environments.

A closer look at the three dimensions of structure (i.e. formalization, centralization, and specialization) points out the conflict in the debate.

First, *formalization* 'refers to the extent to which appropriate behavior is expressed in writing' (Dalton et al., 1980, p.16). In the language of capabilities, formalization reflects the extent to which policies are codified. Essentially, two different strands of arguments exist within the literature on dynamic capabilities. First, capabilities and their evolution are closely tied to the ability to codify, share, and store knowledge throughout the firm (Zollo and Winter, 2002). In this vein, formalization is a precondition of developing capabilities. In other words, a certain degree of formalization is necessary for having dynamic capabilities. Second, dynamic capabilities address unique challenges that require creativity, flexibility, and innovation. Arguments from this campus stand in the tradition of the organic organization. They emphasize the importance of creativity for finding solutions to difficult problems (Prieto and Easterby-Smith, 2006) and the development of 'rules of thumb' for fast decision-making (Eisenhardt and Martin, 2000). At the core, this stream of research proliferates the argument that formalization is harmful to building and sustaining dynamic capabilities.

Several issues produce opposing findings for the effect of formalization on dynamic capabilities. First, the nature of dynamic capabilities is unstable across inquiries. While some studies follow the evolutionary and learning school, other studies use different conceptions. The theoretical nature of these conceptions often remains ambiguous. However, the evolutionary and learning school shows critical deficiencies, too. It is unclear how firms address disruptive changes and expand their knowledge, are creative, and expand their knowledge beyond the areas, already known within the firm. In addition, questions aiming at determining the degree of formalization within different contingencies and contexts have attracted little attention. The level of investigation impacts inquiries concerning structure to a large extent. Whether a dynamic capability is executed on the tactical or capability portfolio level has a significantly different impact on the antecedents and potential or likely outcomes of the dynamic capability. The interaction between levels can be highly important. Also, understanding different dynamic capabilities (possibly divided by levels, as suggested by Foss and Felin (2009) in the context of microfoundations of strategy) or dynamic capability portfolios and their impact on the adaptability of the firm could clarify the debate.

The second dimension of structure, *centralization*, is fundamentally concerned with the locus of authority for decision-making within the firm. One core theme shows inconsistencies in understanding the importance of (de)centralization for dynamic capabilities. Decision speed in volatile environments has been associated with being a decisive factor in competitive battles, driven by dynamic capabilities (Teece, 2007). However, complex decisions are not easily made. While centralized decision-making enables faster strategic decisions (Baum and Wally, 2003), it remains unclear under what conditions they can deliver sufficient quality. Then, decentralization has found to foster the development of dynamic capabilities (Rindova

and Kotha, 2001). The contextual factors that determine the effect of centralization for the execution of dynamic capabilities remain unclear.

Decision speed has been associated with centralized structures (Nickerson and Zenger, 2004). This issue seems to be independent of the debate between the two schools that have contributed to the dynamic capability literature. Rather, decision-speed seems to be an issue of foresight, information-processing, and the ability to enable participative decision-making in centralized structures. One stream of research that looks at such phenomena is literature on ambidexterity. However, the topic of managerial ambidexterity is still in its infancies (Jansen et al., 2006).

Another factor that plays into the relationship between centralization and dynamic capabilities is measurement. Centralization has primarily been assessed on the firm-level. Few inquiries deliver ideas how to inquire on a more detailed basis for investigating interactions within and across firms.

Finally, the third structural dimension, specialization, reflects the number of occupational titles with a firm (Hage and Dewar, 1973). Specialization has two major effects. On the one hand, it fosters expertise which, in turn, has been found to be beneficial for addressing a wide range of areas within the domain of specialization (Pralhad and Hamel, 1990). On the other hand, specialization makes blind for developments that are outside the area of specialization (Livengood and Reger, 2010). Here again, it remains difficult to decide under what contingencies dynamic capabilities are built, sustained, and executed to the benefit of the firm.

Understanding better the effect of specialization on dynamic capabilities requires a clear definition of what a dynamic capability is and what it is not. Arend and Bromiley (2009) demand a differentiation between change and dynamic capabilities that is non-arbitrary. Understanding dynamic capabilities as a learning concept or as a problem-solving capacity leads to different antecedents and outcomes when assessing the impact of specialization on dynamic capabilities. More salient, what needs to be clarified is the degree of specialization and the understanding of what kind and degree of changes will potentially be addressed (Ambrosini and Bowman, 2009).

Overall, contradictory arguments are found in understanding the effect of organization structure for and against the building and sustainability of dynamic capabilities. The next section argues that the mixed findings, concerning structure, are not a unique phenomenon with the dynamic capability view. Rather, the dynamic capability view has failed to provide answers that harm inquiries concerning the relationship to several other organizational phenomena.

4. Discussion

The dynamic capability view has triggered a large number of studies. Significant advances of conceptual and empirical nature have been made over the last 15 years. Yet, some elements within the literature of dynamic capabilities have remained subject to clarification and

further study. The current study has illustrated some of the conflicts prevalent in the literature of dynamic capabilities for understanding the effect of organizational structure on dynamic capabilities. The results offer a number of suggestions for clarifying and unifying inquires examining the effects of structure on dynamic capabilities. The authors identify a number of issues that are not solely harmful for making theoretical predictions for the effect of structure on dynamic capabilities, but are of a more general nature. Three of the issues, identified in the present analysis on the relationship between structure and dynamic capabilities, are discussed below.

The nature of dynamic capabilities remains unclear even after more than a decade of research in the field. As the current analysis of formalization shows, one stream of research builds on routine and capability based arguments, whereas another stream assumes dynamic capabilities to develop from creative acts. Both arguments are problematic. While a routine-based concept risks conceptual implosion when trying to explain 'full-blown' dynamics (Schreyögg and Kliesch-Eberl, 2007), the concept that does not build on this research tradition needs to find other roots. These roots have not been outlined. The nature of dynamic capabilities remains 'mysterious' (Danneels, 2008).

In addition to the ambiguous nature of dynamic capabilities, there is little agreement on their definition despite substantial efforts to unify the definition (Helfat et al., 2007). For example, the present analysis of the inclusion of decision speed shows contradictory arguments. While reviews in the field offer lists of definitions that have been used in literature (e.g. Zahra et al., 2006), successful integration and consensus are absent. Recent suggestions to define dynamic capabilities are interesting and helpful for initiating new research initiatives (Barreto, 2010), but relate to different antecedents and possibly different outcomes than the definitions that have been proposed earlier (Nickerson and Zenger, 2004). Overall, the field needs to find a common ground (Peteraf, DiStefano and Verona, 2013).

Partly due to the unclear nature and diversity of definitions, and partly due to the complexity of the phenomenon, empirical investigations have deployed a number of measures that arguably only moderately reflect dynamic capabilities, if at all. The first set of measures has attracted attention that is based on antecedents or the leverage of existing capabilities (Dutta, 2005; Danneels, 2008; Krisciunas and Drnevich, 2011). Both measurements were based on a first and second order logic of routines (Winter, 2003). Both investigations were not clearly outlining changing environmental conditions; neither could they show disruptive elements in the environment for which dynamic capabilities are essentially designed, given the self-adaptive nature of routines for incremental changes (Feldman and Pentland, 2003). A longitudinal, large scale study is essentially absent in literature.

In summary, the authors of the present paper have detected three elements that contribute to the contradiction, found in the literature, with the help of analysis between the relationship of organizational structure and dynamic capabilities. The nature of dynamic capabilities is

conceptually unclear, too many different definitions are employed, and there exists perplexity concerning the measurement of dynamic capabilities.

Conclusions

In this study, insights into the development of the dynamic capability view over the last 15 years have been presented in order to understand the effect of organizational structure on dynamic capabilities. Most contradictory elements in the literature to date have been found. As a consequence, shortfalls have been identified and ideas provided that help explain the effect of structure and dynamic capabilities in a more coherent way. In addition, the authors have found that some of the challenges in making a clear prediction within the literature of dynamic capabilities are not unique to the case of structure, but can be traced to underlying deficiencies of the dynamic capability view.

Future research needs to find alignment under one or several clearly distinct definition, clarify the theoretical foundations of their definitions and find suitable measures resulting from the definitions. The present analysis suggests that rectifying one problem at a time may lead to a lock in situation. Instead, what is needed, is the research that explicitly addresses the theoretical nature of dynamic capability, provides collectively exhaustive, but mutually inclusive definition of dynamic capabilities and derives good proxies for these constructs. Scholars are invited to join these endeavours.

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Dinaminių gebėjimų prielaidos ir rezultatai: organizacijos struktūros poveikis

Santrauka

Šiame straipsnyje nagrinėjama teorinė ir empirinė dinaminių gebėjimų sampratos problematika, atskleidžiami ne vienus metus trunkantys moksliniai prieštaravimai, kuriuos nemaža dalimi atspindi diskusijos dėl organizacijos struktūros santykio su įmonės dinaminiais gebėjimais.

Dinaminių gebėjimų koncepcija, pasiūlyta Teece, Pisano ir Shuen (1997), siekia atsakyti į fundamentalų klausimą, kaip tikslingai gali kisti įmonių ištekliai ir gebėjimai, įmonei prisitaikant prie dinamiškai kintančios aplinkos. Pasak autorių, tokie gebėjimai lemia gilų verslo ir technologinės aplinkos supratimą, atitinkamų kompetencijų vystymą organizacijoje ir savalaikius sprendimus, kurie būtini siekiant tvaraus konkurencinio pranašumo. Taigi dinaminiai gebėjimai siuraja prasme apibūdinami kaip „įmonės gebėjimas tikslingai keistis“ (Helfat et al., 2007). Iš esmės dinaminių gebėjimų požiūris siekia atsakyti į bazinį strateginio valdymo klausimą: „kaip įmonės gali pasiekti tvarų konkurencinį pranašumą“.

Šiame straipsnyje koncentruojamasi ties konkrečiu klausimu, iliustruojančiu bendrąjį dinaminių gebėjimų problematiką: koks yra organizacijos struktūros ir įmonės dinaminių gebėjimų santykis. Taigi šio straipsnio tikslas yra prisidėti prie diskurso apie dinaminių gebėjimų priežastines sąlygas (antecedentus), išryškinant ir kontekstualizuojant organizacinės struktūros poveikį dinaminiais gebėjimams. Įžvalgos apie struktūros ir dinaminių gebėjimų sąsajas yra aktualios, nes organizacijos struktūra tradiciškai vaidina svarbų vaidmenį organizacijos teorijoje ir strateginiame valdyme (pvz., Barnard, 1938; Chandler, 1962). Vis dėlto dinaminių gebėjimų tyrimų lauke pastebima itin nedaug studijų, nagrinėjančių organizacijos struktūros klausimus. Daugelis tyrimų dinaminių gebėjimų srityje organizacijos struktūros aspektus ignoruoja arba nagrinėja tik netiesiogiai. Be to, net tarp nedaugelio šios srities tyrinėtojų galima pastebėti tam tikrų prieštaravimų. Straipsnyje pateikiama analizė implikuoja, kad šios problemos, siejamos su organizacinės struktūros ir dinaminių gebėjimų santykio neapibrėžtumu, yra tik platesnės mokslinės problemos, apimančios dinaminių gebėjimų ištakas ir konceptualizaciją, fragmentas. Ši problematika susijusi su nepakankamai apibrėžtais dinaminių gebėjimų koncepcijos teoriniais pagrindais.

Nemažai tyrinėtojų laikosi nuostatos, kad dinaminių gebėjimų koncepcijai trūksta rimto mokslinio pagrindo ir apibrėžimo (pvz., apžvalgą pateikia Barreto, 2010). Tuo pačiu visa tai lemia ir prieštaravimus diskusijose apie organizacijos struktūros ir dinaminių gebėjimų sąsajų bruožus.

Tyrimų metodologija remiasi esminių teorinių įžvalgų apie dinaminis gebėjimus apžvalga (Zahra et al., 2006; Barreto, 2010), siekiant identifikuoti straipsnio autorius dominančius tyrimo aspektus. Be to, nagrinėjami pagrindiniai akademiniai darbai apie dinaminis gebėjimus ir jų įžvalgos apie organizacijos struktūros aspektus.

Pažymima, kad vienas pagrindinių dinaminių gebėjimo požiūrio indėlių į organizacijų mokslo vystymąsi siejamas su centrinio vadybos vaidmens išryškinimu. Santykinai nedaug dėmesio tyrimuose skirta atsakymui į klausimus, kokios organizacinės struktūros skatina antreprenerišką vadybą skirtinguose įmonės lygiuose, kaip struktūra įgalina ar varžo komunikaciją ir kokioms sąlygoms esant ji prisideda prie ilgalaikio įmonės gyvavimo.

Dinaminių gebėjimų tyrimų centre yra vadovai, kurių svarbą iliustruoja keli aspektai. Visų pirma ateities poreikių ir iš to kylančių galimybių suvokimas yra labai svarbos dinaminiais adaptacijos procesams. Dinaminiai gebėjimai atspindi vadovo pastangas ir gebėjimą žvelgti į ateitį bei gauti potencialią naudą. Antra, daug tyrėjų skatina nagrinėti kognityvinius ir jausminius dinaminių gebėjimų aspektus (Gavetti, 2005; Hodgkinson, Healey, 2011).

Dinaminių gebėjimų požiūris prieštarauja nusistovėjusiai nuostatai, kad greitai kintančioje aplinkoje labiau tinka organinės struktūros. Teigiama, kad tarp struktūros ir dinaminių gebėjimų pastebimas labiau kompleksinis santykis.

Organizacijos struktūros santykio su dinaminiais gebėjimais analizė grindžiama trimis struktūrą formuojančiomis dimensijomis: *formalizacija*, *centralizacija* ir *specializacija*. Kiekvienos dimensijos atveju identifikuojami ir aptariami pagrindiniai moksliniai prieštaravimai. Galima teigti, kad šių prieštaravimų priežastys nėra unikalios struktūros ir dinaminių gebėjimų santykio kontekste, bet atspindi kur kas bendresnio pobūdžio problemas.

Formalizacija parodo, kiek organizacijos politika remiasi konkrečiais kodais. Jos santykis su dinaminiais gebėjimais yra dvejetainis. Pirma, gebėjimai ir jų evoliucija yra glaudžiai susiję su gebėjimu koduoti, dalintis ir laikyti žinias įmoneje (Zollo, Winter, 2002). Taigi formalizacija yra svarbi gebėjimų vystymo prielaida ir tam tikras formalizacijos laipsnis, neišvengiamas siekiant dinaminių gebėjimų. Antra, dinaminiai gebėjimai atsako į iššūkius, kuriems reikalingas kūrybiškumas, lankstumas ir novatoriškumas. Šios pusės argumentai, akcentuojantys kūrybišką sudėtingų problemų sprendimą, paremia organinės

organizacijos formą (Prieto, Easterby-Smith, 2006). Šiuo požiūriu formalizacija neigiamai veikia dinaminis gebėjimus.

Centralizacijos, lemiančios sprendimo priėmimo galios procesus įmonėje, santykis su dinaminiais gebėjimais ne mažiau problemiškas. Sprendimų priėmimo greitis dinaminėse aplinkose traktuojamas kaip vienas svarbiausių sėkmės veiksnių (Teece, 2007). Tuo tarpu kompleksinėse sistemose sprendimai priimami lėtai. Nors centralizacija lemia greitesnį sprendimų priėmimą (Baum, Wally, 2003), lieka neaišku, kokiomis sąlygomis jie gali būti pakankamai kokybiški. Kita vertus, kai kurie tyrimai rodo, kad decentralizacija prisideda prie stipresnių dinaminis gebėjimų (Rindova, Kotha, 2001). Vis dėlto konkrečios konteksto sąlygos centralizacijos ir dinaminis gebėjimų aspektu nėra aiškios.

Specializacijos poveikis dinaminis gebėjimams taip pat nėra vienareikšmis (Hage, Dewar, 1973). Viena vertus, specializacija skatina gilinimąsi į sritis, kurios vertingos sėkmingam prisitaikymui konkrečioje veiklos srityje (Pralhad, Hamel, 1990). Kita vertus, specializacija trukdo pasinaudoti atsirandančiomis galimybėmis už konkrečios žinomos srities ribų (Livengood, Reger, 2010).

Taigi galima išskirti tris tokių problemų rūšis, siejamas su dinaminio požiūrio problematika:

Pirma, neaiški dinaminis gebėjimų prigimtis. Neaišku, ar ir koku mastu dinaminis gebėjimų samprata sietina su organizacinėmis rutinomis. Tuo atveju jei ši sąsaja egzistuoja, nėra aišku, kaip dinaminis gebėjimai padeda įveikti organizacijos inerciją. Tuo atveju jei šios sąsajos nėra, tai reiškia, kad dinaminis gebėjimų teoriniai pagrindai nepakankamai gerai apibrėžti.

Antra, dinaminis gebėjimų koncepcija pasižymi didele apibrėžimų įvairove. Dėl šios priežasties diskusijai apie dinaminis gebėjimų priežastines sąlygas (antecedentus) ir rezultatus trūksta bendro konceptualaus pagrindo.

Trečia, vienas pagrindinių iššūkių dinaminis gebėjimų srityje yra jų empirinis vertinimas. Dinaminis gebėjimai yra integruota teorinė koncepcija, besiremianti įvairiomis iš daugelio skirtingų mokslo krypčių. Nepaisant tokios įvairovės teikiama privalumų, išlieka problemos dėl tinkamų tyrimo instrumentų pasirinkimo.

Tolimesniuose tyrimuose patartina aiškiai suderinti dinaminis gebėjimų tyrimui svarbius elementus: pasirinkti aiškų apibrėžimą, jo teorinį pagrindimą ir pasirinkti tinkamus tyrimo instrumentus. Atlikta analizė rodo, kad pavienių instrumentų išskyrimas nepadedą atsakyti į rūpimus klausimus. Tai yra svarbi ateities tyrimų erdvė.

Reikšminiai žodžiai: dinaminis gebėjimai, konkurencinis pranašumas, organizacijos struktūra.

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