

TOWARD A RESEARCH AGENDA ON TOP MANAGEMENT TEAMS AND STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

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Abstract

This paper addresses the question, “What’s next in research on top management teams and strategic effectiveness?” Specifically, we focus on the relationship between top management teams and strategy implementation and suggest that strategy implementation has been a missing link between strategy and performance. A research agenda to remedy this deficit is advanced.

Research into the importance of top management has a long history. Initial studies of executive leadership focused on the impact of individual CEOs or general managers (Day & Lord, 1988; Gupta & Govindarajan, 1984; Lieberman & O’Connor, 1972; Miller & Toulouse, 1986; Thomas, 1988). More recent studies, driven by the theoretical constructs of the “dominant coalition” (Cyert & March, 1963) and the “upper echelon” (Hambrick & Mason, 1984), have focused on top management teams. The preponderance of TMT research has been heavily influenced by the decision models of the Carnegie School (Cyert & March, 1963; March & Simon, 1958). The model, as articulated by Hambrick and Mason (1984), suggests that top managers affect organizational outcomes primarily through the decisions or “strategic choices” they make, decisions that are influenced by characteristics (including the cognitive biases and values) of the decision makers. Thus, research has focused on TMT-related

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factors thought to influence strategic decision-making by the team. While accepting the importance of this theoretical model, we believe that the body of research based on it suffers from three limitations.

First, and most importantly, the model makes a significant jump from strategic choice (or strategy formulation) to organizational outcomes. The processes by which strategic choice is implemented— processes associated with what Mintzberg (1978) called “deliberate” strategy—have received little attention. Second, alternatives to the Carnegie decision model exist. Allison (1969), for example, suggests organizational process and bureaucratic political models of decision making in addition to the rational policy model. Indeed, the very term “dominant coalition” (Cyert & March, 1963) implies a political decision process. One might suspect that the influence decision makers have on organizational outcomes will vary depending on which decision model—or combination of models—is operative. Third, the decision model implicit in the TMT research begs the question of possibly significant differences between influence of the TMT on the pursuit of “intended” as compared to “emergent” strategies (Mintzberg, 1978).

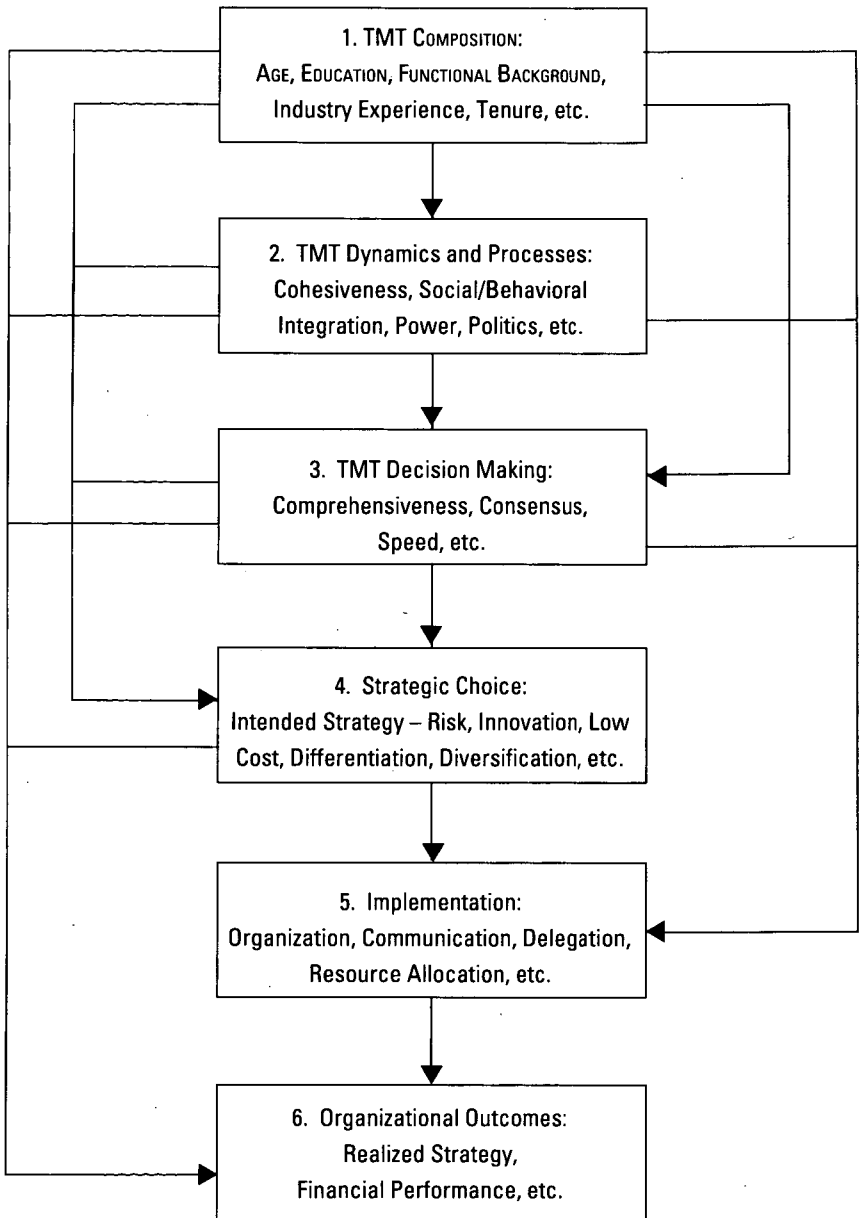
A growing literature on empowerment, self managed teams, and leadership suggests that the role of senior executives is changing from planners and directors to coaches and supporters (c.f., Flood, Gannon & Paauwe, 1996; Manz & Sims, 1993; Smith & Sims, 1995). Thus, the very assumption that TMTs influence organizational outcomes primarily through their influence on strategy formulation may need to be reconsidered.

The purpose of this paper, therefore, is two-fold. First, we summarize the major themes in the TMT literature to demonstrate the current emphasis on rational strategy formulation. Although we believe that this literature is enlightening and important, we argue that the theoretical and empirical omission of implementation requires a significant leap in logic to link TMT characteristics and behaviors to organizational outcomes. Second, we suggest a number of research questions and methodological issues to be considered in developing a program of research designed to reduce this gap in our understanding of the strategic significance of TMTs.

An Overview of Recent TMT Research

Our discussion of the literature follows the general framework presented in Figure 1. This model was developed from an extensive review of the theoretical and empirical literature on top management teams and is presented as an organizing framework for our discussion. It should be considered a descriptive rather than prescriptive model.

Figure 1: An Organizing Framework for Research on Top Management Teams



Top Management Team Composition

Research on top management team composition uses overt characteristics such as age, education, and functional background as markers for values and psychological traits that predispose managers toward certain orientations, styles, and preferences with regard to strategic decisions (Hambrick & Mason, 1984). Thus, the characteristics of the top management team are thought to relate to organizational outcomes—such as strategy and performance—by influencing the decisions made by the team. This stream of research assumes that the decisions of key organizational actors influence organizational outcomes but does not attempt to measure the intended strategy inherent in those decisions against the realized organizational strategy.

Representative studies in this vein include work by Norburn and Birley (1988) and Murray (1989) who linked TMT demographics to firm performance. Bantel and Jackson (1989) found education level and diverse functional background to be related to innovation in the banking industry. Eisenhardt and Schoonhoven (1990) reported founding team size and experience to be related to firm growth, and Wiersema and Bantel (1992) found age, tenure, and education to be related to strategic change. Finally, Finkelstein and Hambrick (1990) found TMT tenure to be related to persistence of strategy, and conformity of strategy and performance to industry norms.

In these studies a range of TMT characteristics are linked to diverse organizational outcomes through the assumption that team composition influences organizational outcomes by way of strategic choice. Importantly, none of these studies actually measured strategic choice or any other potentially intervening construct. This gap was recognized by Jackson (1992) who suggested the need for more research into group processes that might mediate the relationship between TMT composition and organizational outcomes.

To the extent that TMT composition is demonstrated to be of significance for organizational outcomes, research into changes in the composition of the TMT—such as through executive succession (Ancona & Nadler, 1989; Vancil, 1987)—is also of relevance. Kesner & Sebra (1994) and Wallum (1993) provide discussions of this topic, and the article by Weisberg et al earlier in this issue demonstrates the potential of merging these two as yet disparate streams of research.

Although the composition of TMTs has been empirically linked to organizational outcomes, additional work is required to further specify the nature of these relationships. In addition, exploring the impact of changes in TMT composition and investigating the

processes that might mediate the linkages between TMT composition and organizational outcomes are promising areas for research.

Top Management Team Dynamics and Processes

Given the establishment of the TMT as an appropriate unit of analysis, work has begun to elaborate the dynamics and processes that should be most important within the context of the TMT. For example, Finkelstein (1992) has proposed power as an important dynamic within TMTs. Specifically, he suggests that because strategic decisions are unstructured and ambiguous, they invite the use of power in their resolution. To the extent this is true, it challenges the assumption of equal influence that underlies much of the upper echelons-driven research. Empirically, Eisenhardt and Bourgeois (1988) have demonstrated that political behavior to influence decisions increases when power is centralized in the CEO, thus lending support for Finkelstein's contention that power is an important aspect of TMT dynamics, and demonstrating the link between TMT dynamics and decision making. Further, Eisenhardt and Bourgeois' findings indicate that where political behavior emerges, stable alliances form on the basis of such characteristics as age, job title, and prior experience, supporting a link between TMT composition and team dynamics.

Eisenhardt and Bourgeois also found political behavior to be related to poor organizational performance. Interestingly, they speculate that this finding results from the impact political behavior has on decision making: it is time consuming, dissipates energy, restricts the flow of information, and creates barriers to and slows decision making. This suggests the need for additional research to specifically test for relationships between TMT dynamics and decision processes.

Recognizing one of the limitations of the upper echelons perspective, Hambrick (1994) has recently called into question whether top management teams as typically operationalized by strategy researchers are in fact "teams." Thus, he has proposed behavioral integration as a key dimension for TMT research and discusses centripetal and centrifugal forces that affect the integration of the team. Behavioral integration is hypothesized to relate to the team's ability to sense the need for strategic change (decision making) as well as to its ability to formulate and implement organization-wide strategic change, and to influence organizational performance following a major environmental change. Thus, Hambrick has suggested linkages between behavioral integration and each subsequent construct in Figure 1—linkages in need of further elaboration and empirical test.

The study by K.G. Smith et al which appears earlier in this issue specifically tested for relationships between TMT dynamics and organizational outcomes and found social integration—a construct similar to Hambrick's behavioral integration—to be positively related to firm performance while the frequency of communication among team members was negatively related to performance. Similarly, K.A. Smith et al (1993) found TMT cohesiveness to be negatively related to technological innovation. This study also found that TMT cohesiveness and informal communication were positively related to consensus orientation in decision making—demonstrating a link between TMT dynamics and decision processes—and that consensus orientation was positively related to innovation—demonstrating a link between decision processes and organizational outcomes. Together, these results support the importance of including group dynamics in TMT research.

Thus, TMT dynamics and processes have been suggested as intervening variables between TMT composition and decision making, strategic choice, implementation, and organizational outcomes. To date, work has just begun to identify relevant dynamics and their effects, and considerable empirical work remains to be done. And although it has been suggested that TMT dynamics will relate to strategy implementation (Hambrick, 1994), this link has received the least amount of study to date.

Decision Making

Research on the decision making process has been conducted under the assumption that the quality of the decision making process influences the quality of the strategic choice and, by implication, the nature of organizational outcomes. Research on organizational strategy has been heavily oriented toward strategic decision making and there is substantial development of thinking about decision making in general to inspire and support this research. Much of this research is based on a rational decision model derived from the Carnegie School (exemplified by March and Simon, 1958; Cyert and March, 1963; and Ebert and Mitchell, 1975). An alternative perspective views decision making as a negotiated and political process (see for example, Allison, 1969; Lindblom, 1980; and Richards (1986). The tension between these perspectives is evident in the upper echelon theory proposed by Hambrick and Mason which acknowledges the importance of multiple players in the decision making process but relies on a normative, rational model by failing to examine the differential distribution of power within the group.

Within the body of research on decision making there is work that specifically addresses strategic decision making by the top management team. Hitt and Tyler (1991), in empirical work that compared decision making models, lent support to the rational model of decision making when they found that top executives use objective criteria in decision making. Other researchers have identified limitations to this model such as cognitive simplification (Schwenk, 1984) and cognitive biases (Barnes, 1984) which might compromise sensitivity to strategic issues, information processing, and the quality of decisions by the TMT. These limitations and biases are similar to the preferences and styles which Hambrick and Mason (1984) associated with TMT characteristics, thus relating decision making to TMT composition. Decision making and strategic choice are also shown to be affected by group dynamics by Thomas and McDaniel (1990) who investigated the impact of TMT structural variables, such as formalization and interaction, on the use of and labeling of information in strategic decision making.

The role of power and politics in decision making has been explored by other researchers. Richards (1986) explicitly recognized the process of setting strategic goals and objectives to be a political one. Eisenhardt and Bourgeois (1988) demonstrated empirically that "politicized" decision processes within TMTs result in negative organizational consequences. However, further research is needed to elaborate the impact of political processes on decision making and other processes that lead to organizational outcomes.

One method for managing the politics of decision making in a group is consensus, which appears in the literature both as a process in, and as an outcome of, decision making. Ginsberg (1990) focused on the process of consensus within the TMT, describing it as the sociocognitive capacity to synthesize diverse opinions into a shared understanding which guides the TMT in interpreting the environment. He characterized consensus as maintained through the social transactions of the team, which suggests that the decision making process can have an impact on team dynamics. Priem (1990) expanded the use of consensus in the organization by questioning the direction of causality between consensus and firm performance. He asked whether consensus is more relevant to intended strategy (the choice) or to realized strategy (the organizational outcome). Along this line of thinking, the process of consensus reaches out beyond the TMT to involve other actors in the organization, which clearly has implications for the implementation of strategic decisions. In this vein, Wooldridge and Floyd (1989) integrate consensus into the decision making

process by hypothesizing that the degree and scope of consensus will change according to the type of decision making process in use. They distinguish between a synoptic process, one that is rational, sequential, and appropriate for a centralized structure, and an incremental process, which is piecemeal and political, and better suited to a decentralized structure. This work suggests the type of impact that the structure and dynamics of the TMT may have on the implementation of strategy.

From the above it is evident that a great deal of work has been done on strategic decision making and that significant relationships between TMTs and decision making are beginning to emerge. There is also evidence to suggest that causality between such dimensions as TMT dynamics and decision making may be reciprocal. Importantly, there is a great deal of work that remains to be done in this area. For example, it would be of interest to specifically extend the work of Schweiger and Sandberg (1989) and Mannix, Thompson, and Bazerman (1989) to the TMT level, with the intent of exploring how different decision processes affect the quality of strategic choice and the subsequent ease with which that choice is implemented.

Strategic Choice

We define “strategic choice” as a construct separate from implementation and organizational outcomes to capture the notion of intent. With Mintzberg (1978), we believe that intended and realized strategy are distinct (though hopefully related) constructs. We therefore use strategic choice to identify the outcome of a decision process before that decision has been implemented (see Figure 1). Strategic choice also differentiates the content of a strategic decision from the process by which the decision was made.

Unfortunately, this careful distinction between intended and realized strategy has not been made in the TMT literature (Priem, 1990, p. 475). Hambrick and Mason (1984) explicitly linked TMT characteristics to measurable organizational outcomes including both strategy and performance. Thus, the bulk of the research linking TMT characteristics to strategy has relied on measures that capture realized rather than intended strategy. For example, Bantel and Jackson (1989), Wiersema and Bantel (1992), and K. A. Smith et al (1993) all used outcome measures of strategy (or realized strategies) as the dependent variables in their studies.

The bias in the literature toward realized strategy is likely the result of it being easier to observe the results of decisions—to see the pattern in the stream of decisions (Mintzberg, 1978)—than to measure the attitudes, values, and intentions of managers

that motivate and influence those decisions. Indeed, it was just such a focus on observable characteristics that initially lead to the articulation of Hambrick and Mason's (1984) upper echelons perspective. Nevertheless, the focus on objective measures of realized strategy to the exclusion of measures of intended strategy carries with it several assumptions which have masked promising areas of research.

First, the focus on realized strategies within the context of a rational decision model forces the assumption that realized strategy accurately reflects intention; i.e., that intended strategy was pursued "deliberately" (Mintzberg, 1978) and effectively. There are, of course, many ways in which the realization of strategic intent can go awry. For example, an appropriate strategy may be chosen but not be effectively implemented due to a failure to communicate within the organization, poor alignment of operational decisions, lack of focus in operational decisions and actions, or any number of other reasons.

More fundamentally, strategy may not derive from an intentional decision process at all. Mintzberg (1978) has argued that strategy can emerge from within the organization, implying quite a different role for the TMT (Smith & Sims, 1995). The TMT may define strategy by identifying and selecting promising opportunities and activities that arise within the organization and may, to varying degrees, actively construct an emergent process. The characteristics and processes of TMTs that influence emergent strategy processes—such as Quinn's (1980) logical incrementalism—have yet to be explored.

Finally, researchers who have embraced intended strategy as derived from a decision making process (whether rational or political) have, on the whole, assumed away rather than explored the processes and organizational factors that lead to intentions being effectively realized. This has resulted in a dearth of research on the role of the TMT in implementation, even while this role is a likely source of significant variance in organizational performance. This shortcoming is addressed more fully in the concluding section where we outline a proposed research agenda.

Implementation

Implementation has been defined as ". . . the sum total of the activities and choices required for the execution of a strategic plan . . . the process by which strategies and policies are put into action . . ." (Wheelen & Hunger, 1992, p. 236). We believe that top managers play a critical role in the implementation—not just the formulation—of strategy. Hambrick has stated that:

“[TMTs] are responsible for formulating adaptive responses to the environment, *as well as implementing those responses*. As such, the group sometimes is involved in discrete problems or choices . . . however, the group also engages in on-going, day-in/day-out administrative actions which collectively shape the organization’s form and greatly affect the types of problems and alternatives that are even brought to its attention” (1994, p. 175, italics added).

Despite recognition of the potential importance of implementation processes in TMT research (Haleblian & Finkelstein, 1993; Nutt, 1989), few studies have been conducted to directly examine the impact of the top management team on the implementation of strategic decisions. The literature has focused on strategy formulation and has attempted to relate the formulation process to organizational outcomes without regard for the intervening steps of implementation necessary to realize intended strategy. The few studies that address implementation have done so indirectly or with an emphasis on the role of mid-level managers. Top management teams have become virtually invisible in the research literature after strategy formulation despite their important roles in communication, staffing, guidance, control, and evaluation that Barnard (1938) suggests exist beyond the formulation of purpose.

We have noted that the emphasis on strategy formulation (decision making) in the existing literature assumes that the intended strategy closely matches realized strategy in an organization. Further research is needed to investigate the processes by which intended strategy is communicated to the organization and the ways in which intended strategy is put into practice as well as how implementation is monitored and moderated by the top management team. Additionally, Mintzberg’s (1978) definition of strategy as a pattern in a stream of decisions suggests a focus on the role of TMTs in emergent strategy processes. Hart (1992) suggests that strategy can emerge from below in the organization and that rather than setting strategy, the top management team responds to the messages from the organization for direction by selecting promising proposals. These theoretical perspectives emphasize the need to better understand the TMT’s role in the implementation of strategy.

Recent work by Guth and MacMillan (1986), Wooldridge and Floyd (1990), and Westley (1990) has focused on middle management involvement in strategy implementation. They contend that implementation problems often arise due to lack of understanding of and commitment to strategic decisions on the part of middle managers who are often excluded from the strategy formulation process. But as

Barnard (1938) points out, it is the role of the top executives (the TMT) to ensure the smooth operation of the entire executive structure and to communicate effectively with that executive structure. This suggests research into the process by which the TMT includes middle management in strategy formulation and/or effectively disseminates goals and strategies throughout the management structure.

TOWARD RESEARCH ON TMTs AND IMPLEMENTATION

The preceding discussion allows us to draw several conclusions. First, TMTs have measurable influence on organizational outcomes. Empirical studies have consistently demonstrated links between TMTs and strategy (c.f., Bantel & Jackson, 1989; Wiersema & Bantel, 1992) and performance (c.f., Murray, 1989; Norburn & Birley, 1988). Second, most of the research linking TMTs to organizational outcomes has been based on an often implicit decision model that includes the assumed but mostly unmeasured intervening variables of decision making (decision processes), strategic choice (decision outcomes), and implementation. Thus, we believe that the model presented in Figure 1 is a sound representation of the conceptual framework underlying most research on TMTs. Third, there has been uneven exploration of the variables thought to mediate the relationships between TMTs and organizational outcomes (c.f., K.A. Smith et al, 1993; K.G. Smith et al, 1994). We believe that the lack of investigation into these intervening variables has left significant gaps in our understanding of the importance and function of TMTs.

Gaps In Our Understanding

The most significant gap in our understanding of the role of the TMT is in the area of strategy implementation. Many authors have suggested that senior executives spend most of their time managing day-to-day operations rather than struggling with decisions with "bet the company" significance (c.f., Hambrick, 1994; Hickson et al, 1986). Yet the substantial body of research is dedicated to strategy formulation, while the characteristics and behaviors of TMTs that relate to strategy implementation remain to be identified and explored. The investigation of the role of the TMT in strategy implementation has been significantly slowed by the failure to distinguish between intended strategy (referred to here as strategic choice) and realized strategy. Studies to date have uniformly used objective, outcome-oriented measures to capture the strategy construct, which are measures of realized rather than intended strategy.

The result is the “theoretical leap” over implementation discussed previously.

The argument that TMT characteristics and dynamics influence strategic choice and that realized strategy is the outcome of that choice assumes that strategies are deliberately implemented. The additional assumption that the choice of an appropriate strategy will yield superior firm performance further complicates the TMT to outcome connection. Superior performance may be the result of good choice of strategy, good implementation of strategy, or some combination of both. Most likely, superior performance will be achieved through effective implementation of an appropriate strategy. But it goes without saying that no chosen strategy—no matter how good—will influence performance unless and until it is put into action. To the extent that intended strategy is theoretically separable from realized strategy, empirical work is needed to establish and explain a link between TMTs and intended strategy. Any difference discovered between how TMT characteristics and dynamics relate to intended versus realized strategy would demonstrate that choice of strategy does not necessarily result in the realization of that strategy, emphasizing the importance of implementation.

A third gap in our understanding of TMTs results from the almost exclusive focus on rational versus political (or other) decision models and the assumption of deliberate rather than emergent strategies. With few exceptions (c.f., Eisenhardt & Bourgeois, 1988), recent TMT research has assumed that realized strategy results from the deliberate implementation of rationally derived strategic choices. However, Mintzberg (1978) and Quinn (1980) provide compelling arguments for the existence of emergent strategies, and suggest that it is possible to create “deliberately emergent” strategy making processes, as in the Crescive model suggested by Bourgeois and Brodwin (1984). There has been little, if any, research to explore the TMT’s role in establishing and maintaining emergent strategy processes, despite their documented existence (Smith & Sims, 1995). As seen in the classic work of Barnard (1938) and recognized by practitioners, senior executives have primary responsibility for managing the strategic management process. Thus, there is a continuing need to focus on the role of TMTs in all facets of strategic management, including formulation and implementation.

Toward a Research Agenda

Research on the TMT's role in strategy implementation needs to address several empirical and theoretical questions. Among the empirical questions to be addressed are the following:

1. What are the roles and functions of TMTs that pertain to strategy implementation as opposed to formulation?
2. What are the dimensions of TMT composition and process that influence strategy implementation?
3. How and to what extent do relationships between TMT dimensions and strategy implementation influence overall firm performance?
4. How and to what extent do the dimensions of TMT composition and process that facilitate effective strategy implementation vary across strategies and contexts?

The definition and operationalization of effective strategy implementation is the first priority within this agenda. It is important to differentiate the measures of effective implementation (e.g., did we do what we said we would do, and how well did we do it?) from the measure of the results of effective implementation (i.e., superior organizational performance). Without such specification, researchers will continue to assume away rather than measure implementation processes.

Once the task of specifying the measurement of implementation has begun, effort may be directed toward defining and operationalizing the implementation-related tasks and roles of the TMT. A first step would be to ask the positivist question: "What do TMTs do to implement strategy?" Subsequent steps would be to begin exploring how various composition and process dimensions of the TMT relate to these implementation processes, paralleling the research that has linked such TMT dimensions to organizational outcomes.

Eventually, this research stream will have to address how TMT implementation roles and behaviors relate to subsequent firm performance. On this point, it will be imperative to isolate the quality of a chosen strategy from the quality of its implementation. A general hypothesis would be that performance will be maximized by the effective implementation of an appropriate strategy. But what about the case in which an appropriate strategy is ineffectively implemented, or an inappropriate strategy is "effectively" implemented? The examination of such questions promises rich rewards, especially should it be found that the TMT dimensions that relate to

strategy implementation either diverge from those that relate to strategy formulation, or have contradictory impact on the different stages of the strategy process.

Beyond these fundamental research questions relating to TMT roles in strategy implementation, several other promising areas of research are suggested by our review. For example, a typology of strategy making processes could be used to examine whether and how different TMT dimensions relate to particular strategy making processes. This might open the door to an investigation of whether certain TMT characteristics predispose an organization to adopt a particular approach to strategy making. For example, it might be hypothesized that a formal, centralized TMT dominated by the CEO might tend to adopt a centralized planning approach to strategic management.

Finally, contingency theory suggests further exploration into the conditions under which emergent strategy processes might be more effective than deliberate processes. To the extent that different processes can be shown to be advantageous under differing environmental conditions, prescriptive work is needed to help TMTs build and effectively manage appropriate processes.

In addition to the empirical lines of research suggested above, the current state of TMT research suggests several areas for further theoretical development. Two such areas are captured in the following questions:

1. When considering the TMT's role in the strategy making process, where does intended strategy end and emergent strategy begin?
2. To what extent can TMT efforts to manage deliberately emergent strategies be characterized as "implementation?"

The term "implementation" implies the execution of a predetermined plan. Mintzberg's (1978) notion of emergent strategy, however, assumes the absence of such a plan. Thus, although the management of implementation and the management of emergent strategy might entail many of the same behaviors on the part of the TMT, the two are distinct constructs that should not be confused. How then should top management efforts to develop deliberately emergent strategy processes be characterized? Do such efforts represent strategy formulation, implementation, or, in Mintzberg's terms, strategy formation? The answers to these questions clearly have implications beyond TMT research. Nevertheless, such questions need to be addressed if repeatedly observed relationships between TMT dimensions and organizational outcomes are to be fully understood.

Methodological Challenges

It should be evident that opening the “black box” of TMTs and strategy implementation will not be easy. While there are many methodological challenges to be overcome, three are worthy of particular attention.

First is the measurement of intended rather than realized strategy. Measuring intention implies gaining an understanding of senior executives’ goals and objectives before effort is expended toward their accomplishment. Unfortunately, such information is often sensitive—for competitive or even personal reasons—and thus often not readily forthcoming. Further, where a deliberately emergent strategy process is operative—such as Quinn’s (1980) logical incrementalism—objectives that exist are likely to be general in nature and worded in a way that maintains strategic flexibility. Nevertheless, an effort to measure intended strategy is important in that it provides a baseline against which to measure strategy implementation.

A second, closely related issue is the timing of measurement. As Priem (1990) points out, attempting to measure intentions after the fact may result in recollections of intent that are colored by actual results. This suggests that researching relationships between TMT dimensions, strategy implementation, and subsequent firm performance must rely on real-time, longitudinal studies. Third, to the extent that the unit of analysis is in fact the TMT, a great deal of effort must be made to measure characteristics of the team rather than those of individual managers. This suggests intensive data collection from numerous respondents within each subject organization, and great care in combining these data into aggregate measures of the team construct. We believe that these challenges, although daunting, are not insurmountable.

Conclusion

Research into the strategic role and function of TMTs is off to a propitious start. Some areas benefit from well developed theoretical perspectives and substantive empirical work, while others, especially the role of the TMT in strategy implementation, have not received much attention. We argue that much of the existing TMT research is predicated on the assumption of a high correlation between strategic choice and realized strategy and suggest that TMT research will benefit from the careful examination of this assumption. Although the role of the TMT in building and maintaining the organization was suggested by Barnard decades ago, much challenging work remains to define, operationalize, and explore concepts related to this field.

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