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My How Things Have Changed! Strategic Organization Development and the Transformation of Human Resource Management

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Abstract

The purpose of this book Strategic Organization Development is to report a metasynthesis research study focusing on a human resources management approach - Strategic Organizational Development. The book is written by Sharadindu Pandey who conducted a meta synthesis research study that is the focus of the book. The book is organized by chapters in which each is devoted to a step in the metasynthesis process. Pandey details the many decisions that must be made by the researcher employing this method as well as discussing the importance of the use of strategic organization development to build actionable knowledge. Valuable features of this book include the provision of a unique view of evolving metasynthesis research and the perspective of understanding the emerging use of the 'Strategic Business Model' of an organization being aligned with the Organizational Development of a company. This is not a book for light reading; rather this book would be most meaningful for those readers that are informed on the subjects of metasynthesis, qualitative research, business management, and strategic organization development.

Keywords

MetaSynthesis, Qualitative Research, Qualitative Synthesis Research, Business Management, Business Management Research, Human Resources Management, Strategic Organizational Development, Organization Management

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My How Things Have Changed! Strategic Organization Development and the Transformation of Human Resource Management

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The purpose of this book Strategic Organization Development is to report a metasynthesis research study focusing on a human resources management approach - Strategic Organizational Development. The book is written by Sharadindu Pandey who conducted a metasynthesis research study that is the focus of the book. The book is organized by chapters in which each is devoted to a step in the metasynthesis process. Pandey details the many decisions that must be made by the researcher employing this method as well as discussing the importance of the use of strategic organization development to build actionable knowledge. Valuable features of this book include the provision of a unique view of evolving metasynthesis research and the perspective of understanding the emerging use of the 'Strategic Business Model' of an organization being aligned with the Organizational Development of a company. This is not a book for light reading; rather this book would be most meaningful for those readers that are informed on the subjects of metasynthesis, qualitative research, business management, and strategic organization development. Keywords: MetaSynthesis, Qualitative Research, Qualitative Synthesis Research, Business Management, Business Management Research, Human Resources Management, Strategic Organizational Development, Organization Management

My How Things Have Changed! Yes, since I graduated from undergraduate college as a business administration/accounting major in the mid-seventies, the progress of business practices, policies, and procedures simply amazes me! Of course, back then computers were the size of rooms and Fortran was a language class that taught one how to write computer programs. Those programs consisted of mostly simple loops and go to commands that required an IBM card for each command line. Oh, those stacks of cards! The class for Personnel, as it was called back then was learning about how to run that type of department within a company. I remember the class being a straightforward course of learning what records needed to be kept, how to interview a candidate for a position, how to write announcements for positions, company newsletters, and reports for management as well as keeping records for compliance to the laws that had been enacted to protect workers.

Strategic Organization Development well illustrates the dramatic transformation of the 1970's Personnel Department to the current field of Human Resource Management Departments. How this business department changed is similar in scale to how the computer has changed in that time as well. Nowadays, the perspective of how a Human Resources Department functions and what the range of its responsibilities encompass within a company has morphed into something far beyond what could have been imagined 35 years ago. Currently, theorists debate the issue of the range of functioning of a Human Resources Department either as a part of the company's decision-making management team or as an administrative support department for the other management level executives. The debate has some strong points on the side of the expanded view of Human Resources managers collaborating with the other managers and who both understand the company's business

strategy, the implications that the strategy has for the company, and the Human Resources needs that accompany that strategy (Couch, 2009). Michael Couch, who is President of Michael Couch & Associates, Inc., a consulting practice focused on dramatically improving the capacity of organizations, teams, and individuals, has a company website that presents the expanded view of the Human Resource manager. Couch states on his website, “Strategy-Driven Organizational Development is a process that permits Human Resources to collaborate with business leaders to: translate business strategy into organization and talent demands, assess the existing organization capacity and compare it against the strategic requirements, and address capacity gaps in a fashion that provides the greatest impact on the business results” (Couch, 2009, p. 2) Furthermore, Couch (2009) summarizes his position with this statement also from his website, “The data is clear – for Human Resources to be seen as a collaborative business partner, to be seen playing a strategic role, it is critical that the function and it’s leaders demonstrate a clear understanding of business strategy and the implications that the strategy has on the organization’s talent” (p. 2). Well, this is an entirely different perspective of the Human Resources Department!

In response to this debate, many researchers and theorists have offered categories of companies’ business operational style, interventions to promote needed change for a company to incorporate movement in a particular direction, and the job descriptions of the managers of those departments, which have been examined since 1989. Some researchers have developed strategy typologies from common characteristics of companies, there are 2 studies before 1976 and there have been 10 studies since. The author, Sharadindu Pandey, has taken on the task to review this mass of primary research studies on those topics, strategic archetypes, the strategic roles of Human Resource Managers, and the Strategic Organizational Development Interventions in this meta-synthesis research project. Pandey set out to find which Strategic Organizational Development Interventions would work for which Strategic Typology-Archetype. This book is a report of the results of his metasynthesis research study and how he has chosen to share the results of his project.

Meta-synthesis is an emerging qualitative research method that gathers the knowledge contained within published individual primary research studies, brings these findings together, which creates a new knowledge of what has been explained by the primary studies and what has possibility been left unexplained. Because of the creation of this new more vast knowledge the metasynthesis method is considered to be a more powerful method of research and one whose ability to develop theories to inform policies, procedures, and practices is now being recognized in the fields of healthcare, social sciences, and with this study conceivably business.

In chapter 1, the author explains what the role of the organizational-environmental context of a company plays in necessitating that the Human Resource Department to go beyond its limited administrative support role for the company to a role that includes developing and shaping as a strategic manager, fully integrated as a executive of the management decision making team and forecasting the future needs of the company in terms of talent of the individuals employees the company employs. The author discusses the dichotomous debate amongst theorists in the Human Resources field and the two Strategic Organizational Development Intervention approaches that are given the names of: Universal view and Contingent view. The definition of the Universal view is an intervention approach that would work for every company in any situation and the Contingent view as an intervention approach that is dependent on the particular situations within that particular company. Pandey reports that the theorists who hold the Contingent perspective are gaining popularity among practitioners. Therefore, the main research question Pandey sought to answer in this work was, “How to select the set of particular Organization Development interventions to match given strategic environments?” The author discusses the reason he

chose the method of meta-synthesis for his research as, “trying to address the need that was established by others for theory building with action steps that can be brought out of it.”

In chapter 4, Pandey details his journey through the research study using the meta-synthesis research method that he chose. The author listed the four research objectives that he set for this study, as well as a list of ten rationale for utilizing this method as the best to achieve the four research objectives. Pandey discusses his search strategy to reveal the method as theoretical sampling, which Glaser and Strauss (1967) describe as a repetitive sampling process that is constructed on emerging theoretical concepts. This sampling strategy has the objective of developing an enhanced understanding of the dimensions of a theory across a scope of settings and conditions. Additionally, Noblit and Hare's (1988) reciprocal transactional analysis was used to glean “a list of themes with a key metaphor of each study (45).” Pandey's study included 80 cases studies in total and the distribution of cases was: 43 cases to strategic fit, 21 cases to strategic change, and 16 cases depicted culture change. The raters of the cases were Pandey and his doctoral supervisor, who were independent of each other and agreed on the inclusion of the 80 cases. Other cases that were not agreed upon by both were set aside for other future research studies. Cohen's Kappa was used with the included studies, which showed moderate to substantial agreement on the individual cases between the raters. Moreover, Pandey in chapter 2 describes the literature search strategy that he chose in the metasynthesis research process and contains the justification of their chosen strategy. The project considered the interaction of how the Human Resource Department functions with the overall business strategy of the organization and how this is interrelated to the Organizational Development practices. Pandey reviewed 248 interventions techniques for organizational development and selected 16 to include in his research, which are described in chapter 2. Additionally, Pandey introduces three typologies-archetypes of strategies, which were identified through the literature review search process: Defender, Prospector, and Innovator. These typological archetypes are defined by their strategic orientations/environmental factors and are compared to the relevant organizational options: nature of activities engaged in, primary means of competitive advantage, benefits, costs and risks, functional strategy/organization resource implication. Later in the book, the author uses the strategic archetypes and the organizational development interventions to reveal the results in terms of static/incremental and transformational change.

In chapter 3, Pandey presents the theoretical framework that he employed for the organizational strategy alignment from both perspectives of change: static and transformational. Additionally, explains Pandey that he chose to include only the typological archetypes of defender and innovator and he sought to find the right fit between the two debated organizational strategy perspectives for this study. The interventions for static change for defenders were: Storytelling and Myth propagation, Process Consultation and Role Negotiation Techniques, Employee Engagement, and Employee Loyalty Programs and Job Characteristics Model. The study also addresses some interventions from the transformational change, some for studying culture change, and cultural orientation. The transformational change interventions for the Strategic change between Strategic archetypes or Cultural change between types were: Parallel Learning Structure, Open Systems Planning, Transformational Leadership, Employee Engagement, Role and Career Management, Appreciative Inquiry, and Trans-Cultural Planning Process. Furthermore, this chapter offers the reader fuller descriptions of the two chosen typological archetypes and compares the character traits of each with their strategic priorities against the Organizational Development Interventions, and presents the expected outcome from those matches. Pandey explains that the options for transformational change must be either strategic or cultural types, not both together.

In chapters 5 and 6 the author here discusses the synthesizing of the 43 cases of defenders and innovators interventions for static change. The two raters reviewed the

evidence that was used to interpret the appropriateness of particular interventions for the strategy of defenders and innovators types. The author provides a meta-schedule of pre and post state of change in strategy of the defenders and innovators as a result of the organizational development interventions. The author took the product of the synthesis, the integrative formal knowledge from the pre and post state of change, and developed this into a concept map containing this information for defender strategy and innovator strategy. The evidence shows how the interventions helped the defender to better address their engineering, entrepreneurial and administrative problems, while maintaining; cost efficiency, control, stability and better customer service and other inventions facilitated strategy rather than contribute to the effectiveness of the outcomes. Additionally, the meta-synthesis showed that change management practices help innovators to improve all the dimensions of innovations and the interventions helped in harmonizing multiple technologies, better worker's satisfaction, managing complexities and leveraging external and internal knowledge.

In chapters 7 and 8, Pandey explores the role of Organizational Development Interventions in facilitating strategy and culture re-orientations in companies. The author's iterative search for strategic interventions that produced 37 individual primary research studies, which were primarily single case studies and these were synthesized to interventions that transformational change was the results both from the 21 strategic and 16 culture interventions. Both chapters discuss in detail each of the 37 interventions and which intervention address different needs of the typological archetypes. The author identified four strategic re-orientations interventions: Prospector-Innovator, Defender-Innovator, Prospector-Defender, and Defender-Prospector as well as four culture re-orientations interventions: Internal-External, External-Internal, Control-Flexibility, and Flexibility-Control. The author summarizes his findings that some of the interventions helped the defenders to move into other strategic typological archetypes of innovators and prospectors.

Chapter 9 is the report of an independent grounded theory field study that is not part of the formal metasynthesis project; its purpose is to present the opposing cultural orientations of exploration and exploitation as it builds its case to explain when change of innovators takes place independently of each other and what the culture of that particular company would look like. The study used Hofstede's (1990) descriptions of innovators with six common culture dimensions: Normative and Pragmatic, Process oriented and Result oriented, Loose and Tight, Parochial and Professional, Open system and Closed system, and Job oriented and Employee oriented to explore the bivalent nature of the two cultures that coexist in innovative organizations. The study finds that the two opposing cultural orientations must be approached and managed in a bivalent approach because of the distinct difference of the perspectives of the employees, which make up each group. Additionally, the research findings on the two cultural orientations interventions found that when the management style of the managers matched the characteristics of the workers typology especially, what motivates them, change in a positive direction could take place, when the styles did not match, no progress or regression was the results.

Chapter 10 offers the summation of the research findings and it features the contribution the study will make to the fields within business, human resources, and management, the limitations of the study, and direction that can be glean from the study. According to the author, the study found good support for the theoretical frameworks of the static changes in Defender (0.539) and Innovator Strategic Archetypes (0.522) that he described in chapter 3 of this book. Pandey reports a Kappa value of 0.658 for Strategic Transformation, which is substantial agreement. Additionally, Pandey reports that his study found only partial support for the transformational changes and theoretical framework pertaining strategic interventions and cultural interventions (0.60) of which he identified multiple interventions. The author included in this study a schedule for changes in Defender

and Innovator Strategies as well as Knowledge Maps for all three Strategic Archetypes that could be used for future research on these subjects. There are two overall contributions this study can proclaim, the first is the importance of a "tight fit" between the External Business Strategy, which Couch explained on his website and the Human Resources Management. And secondly, the fit between the organizational culture and the company's cultural orientation, and its business strategy. These findings will be able to well-inform policies, procedures, and practice for companies and their Human Resources Departments in the future.

The book would be a challenge for anyone who is not well informed in qualitative meta-synthesis research, Human Resource Department Theory, and Strategic Organization Development. Therefore, I would not recommend this book for everyone. Although, for someone who is familiar with those subjects the study would be amazing helpful for them since the synthesis has produced a rich collection of resource material for the future study of these theories, development of policies and procedures in a company, and the practice of the interventions in the business world. I found it exciting to see this research method used in the business environment. I became familiar reading about the method used in healthcare as most of the articles concerning metasynthesis that I found in my search for the annotated bibliography seemed to be in the field of nursing and the authors were encouraging their readers to employ that method in research studies to change policies, and procedures in healthcare. I could see the logic about its' use there, and this study has taken this method in a new direction for me and shows that it potential is only limited by our imaginations for using it in new situations.

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