

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT

A CASE ABOUT DETERMINING THE FACTOR”S” THAT
IMPACT STRATEGIC AGILITY IN A MULTINATIONAL
ORGANIZATION

by
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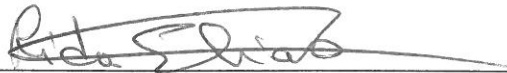
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AN ABSTRACT OF THE PROJECT

Dalal Naji Alameh for Master of Human Resources Management
Major: Human Resources Management

Title: Determining the factors that impact strategic agility in a head office of a multinational organization.

We examine the factors that impact strategic agility in the headquarters office of a multinational organization. Organizations need to be agile more than ever before due to the shifting regulatory, consumer, technological and political world environment. In this study we employ interviews, internal organization documents and personal observations to collect relevant data. Subsequent analysis of the data shows that the corporate culture and nature of the organization are the major factors impacting strategic agility more than others. Leadership profile also emerges as being another important factor, while diversity plays a marginal role but not as significant as the other factors.

Keywords: Strategic agility, Organizational Culture, Leadership profile

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

A. A case about determining the factors that impact strategic agility in a multinational organization

In today's business environment, established organizations with diverse employee cultures are facing growing levels of uncertainties in the marketplaces and increased levels of turbulences (as cited by Christofi et al. 2013; Braunscheidel & Suresh, 2009).

Organizations are operating in ambiguous and challenging environments (Tanriverdi et al., 2010; Lu & Ramamurthy, 2011). Environments that are characterized by growing levels of aggressive competition, shifting consumer preferences, heightened regulatory activities, currency devaluations, economic slowdowns and increased violence (Goldman, Nagel & Preiss, 1995).

In addition, teams are required to work across different time zones (Horney et al. 2010), with team members being geographically dispersed, which is presenting additional challenges. Teams are located at a distance from each other that is forcing them to accommodate for evening and very early morning calls to ensure they accomplish the organizational tasks (Malhotra et al 2007). Teams are also enforced to invest in more time to ensure more frequent connects with other team members to maintain trust and stay highly engaged in the absence of the face-to-face meetings (Kirkman et. al 2002).

To overcome these challenges organizations have to focus on their ability on reacting faster to changes by becoming more agile (Arteta & Giachetti, 2004). Several

organizations' capabilities are believed to increase the organization's agility (Doz & Kosonen 2010).

Such as the organizations processes and systems, its leader's ability to make fast and quick decisions (Eshlaghy et al.2010), which helps the organizations to take advantage of external opportunities faster.

Employees' willingness to accept frequent changes that will enable the organization to respond to changes faster given there is less internal resistance to change (Junni et al. 2015). Organizations should become more agile (Horney & O'Shea 2010) to deliver sustainable growth. That said agility is believed to have a significant impact on the performance and productivity of an organization, especially during times of uncertainties (Weber & Tarba 2014).

In this paper, I will be looking into factors that might impact the organizations' agility using a case study to best understand the issue (Stake, 1995). I will be also exploring the impact of employees' multi-cultures on agility. Given that based on the available literature and up to my knowledge, it seems that the impact of employees' cultures on agility has not been studied yet.

B. My research context

My case will focus on the agility scores of an organizational health survey (OHS) at one of the international headquarters offices of a multinational consumer organization. The OHS survey is a global employee feedback process that provides employees with the opportunity to provide their feedback on their experiences as employees on a yearly basis on the following eight categories, agility, alignment, commitment, Jobs & careers, manager, work group, satisfaction and engagement.

The headquarters office covers the area of Asia, Middle East & North Africa sector and includes 40+ active countries, mostly developing markets with 7 out of 10 of the most populous countries in the world. The sector has 26,000+ employees, 900 + ethnicities and 22+ languages used at work. The headquarters office is located in Dubai and has more than 250+ employees, and 40+ nationalities. The international headquarters office is a very diverse office unlike other regional offices which are characterized by a uni-cultural environment (Table 1.1 gives a brief overview of the organization's profile).

Respondents in the headquarters office scored the lowest on agility, in comparison to other regional offices. The low scores on agility represent a significant challenge on several fronts as shared several times by the top management team. Embracing an agile culture and ways of working is one of the factors that will determine the success of the organization and the sector. Maybe that does not exist elsewhere, however that is what the top management team at the organization senses.

The organization has invested heavily through multi-year transformational and streamlining programs to strengthen the organization's culture and enable agility. Yet employees don't feel the organization is as agile as it needs to be. On the business front, employees feel that decision making is slow which is impacting the business performance. On the people front, employees are sensing that the lack of agility is leading to a low employee engagement index, causing them to become demotivated and less productive.

Table 1.1. Organizational profile

Organization Overview	Global Food and Beverage Company
Multinational Organizations' Brands	22 brands that each generate \$1 billion in estimated annual retail sale
Number of employees worldwide	263,000 people
Organization Unit Overview	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Covers 60+ active countries• 51 company-owned plants (24 Beverage sites & 27 Food plants)• 146 franchise, 132 co-packer, and 11 joint venture
Number of employees in organization unit	30,000 Employees
Number of countries the organizational unit covers	More than 90 countries

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Definition of strategic agility

Given the increased attention and importance it has been given, especially recently, many researchers have tried to study strategic agility and the factors that define it.

According to Oyedijo (2012), the concept of agility originated from the research work sponsored by the US Government at the Iacocca institute in 1991. A dedicated group of executives from thirteen companies in the USA were brought together to come up with a vision based strategy for the emerging global competitive environment (Dove 1991). The group later identified agility as the most important characteristic for organizations entering in the 21st century. Given that agility will allow organizations to thrive in an environment of constant and unpredictable change (Dove 1991).

Following that study, several definitions of agility have been offered in an effort to clarify its meaning. Kock and George (2016), defined strategic agility as the organization's ability to transform and adapt its portfolio to external changing circumstances, such as new customer demands, external competition, changes in technological trends and resources. Fourné et al. (2014), defined agility as “the meta-capability that creates and deploys a dynamic balance between sensing local opportunities, enacting global and capturing local value over time” (p.14).

Lewis et al. (2014), on the other hand, considered strategic agility to be the organization's ability to constantly remain flexible while reacting to ongoing evolving

circumstances. Lewis believes that organizations need to have the ability to change fast in response to external changing conditions.

Eshlaghy et al.(2010) and Sambamurthy et al. (2003) , defined agility as the ability of an organization to succeed in a competitive and rapidly changing environment. That would require organizations to create more customized products to satisfy the customer's increasing and changing demands through the pursuit of knowledge to learn more about unknown opportunities and gain competitive edge. Organizations should also have advanced technologies with an innovative management structure and a highly-trained, motivated and empowered people.

Other scholars defined strategic agility in term of the organization's ability to flawlessly re-arrange its resources and processes to react to evolving business surroundings (Mavengere, 2013; Tallon et al. 2011; Weber and Tarba 2014).

Many of the scholars agreed that having the ability to respond fast to changes was one of the mandatory factors necessary for organizations to be agile. This was evident in several of the scholar's definitions of agility such as Jamrog et al. (2006) who defined agility as the ability to “move quickly, decisively and effectively in anticipating, initiating and taking advantage of change” (p. 5). Moreover, Tallon and Pinsonneault (2011) also defined agility “as the ability to detect and respond to opportunities and threats in the environment with ease, speed and dexterity” (p. 464). Similarly, Sambamurthy et al. (2003) defined strategic agility as the organization's ability to quickly and surprisingly sense and seize market opportunities. Table 2.1. provides a brief summary of all mentioned previous definitions of strategic agility.

All in all, scholars seem to believe that organizations should have the ability to build unique skills that help them overcome competition. Those skills include the

organization's brand and customer base, the organization's core capabilities, the IT-infrastructure's capability, the organization's structure, as well as the employees' ability to adapt to change and effectively manage uncertainty (Nicholas, 2013 & as cited in Christofi et al., 2013).

Table 2.1. A brief summary of all definitions of strategic agility

Definitions for Strategic Agility	Defined by
Agility is the organizations ability to transform and adapt its portfolio to external changing circumstances, such as new customer demands, external competition, changes in technology trends and resources.	Kock & George 2016
Strategic agility is “the meta-capability that creates and deploys a dynamic balance between sensing local opportunities, enacting global and capturing local value over time”. Lewis et al.2014 defines strategic agility as the flexible reactions to the ongoing evolving circumstances.	Fourné et al. 2014 p.14
Agility is the ability of organizations to succeed in a competitive, rapidly changing, volatile and high velocity environment. Strategic agility involves anticipating future events, being well prepared and rapidly adapting to changes in the environment through satisfying the customer's increasing and changing demands by creating more customized products when needed. Agility is also believed to be a result of an innovative management structure, a highly trained, motivated and empowered people in addition to a set of advanced, flexible and intelligent technologies.	Eshlaghy et al.2010
Strategic agility is the organization's ability to sense and seize competitive market opportunities through the pursuit of knowledge to learn about unknown opportunities and gain competitive edge, exploring new alternatives and refining already existing competencies, technologies, and knowledge.	Sambamurthy et al.2003
Strategic agility is the organization's ability to remain flexible, quickly detect changing circumstances and flawlessly re-arrange its resources and processes to react to evolving business surroundings.	Mavengere 2013 & Tallon et al. 2011; Junni et al. 2015; Doz & Kosonen 2010
Strategic ability is the organization's ability to transform its structure and the way it operates regularly and quickly rather than just changing the way things are done.	Weber, Y., & Tarba, S. Y. 2014
Strategic agility is the organization's ability to quickly and surprisingly sense and seize market opportunities.	Sambamurthy et al.2003
Strategic agility is the organization's ability to anticipate and quickly react to unpredictable environmental changes through detecting opportunities and responding to them.	Schneider & Spieth 2012
Agility is the organization's ability to “moving quickly, decisively and effectively in anticipating, initiating and taking advantage of change”.	Jamrog et al., 2006 p. 5
Agility is the organization's ability "to detect and respond to opportunities and threats in the environment with ease, speed and dexterity”.	Tallon & Pinsonneault, 2011, p. 464

In my literature review I have found different definitions for strategic agility. However, two main themes emerged; the ability to sense opportunities and the ability to respond to those opportunities. Speed was a required feature for both activities. Most of the scholars emphasized on the need of speed in anticipating changes and responding to them.

Through my literature, one varying definition emerged that focused on the need of rearranging of internal resources, processes and structure.

For the purpose of this study, I adopt the following definition for agility based on the previous research, which defines agility as follows: agility is the ability of organizations to sense opportunities and react quickly to changing circumstances. This definition is comprehensive and takes all previous definitions into account.

B. Why is strategic agility important?

Strategic agility is essential for organizations to effectively anticipate environmental changes (Sambamurthy, Bharadwaj, & Grover, 2003). Strategic agility has become one of the most important factors in determining organization's success (Weber, Y., & Tarba, S. Y. 2014), as it creates value in the organization (Hugos 2009; Raynus, 2011). It supports organizations to successfully operate in extremely competitive environments (Fourné et al., 2014; Horney & O'Shea 2010) and helps organizations gain competitive advantage through incorporating knowledge from across the globe to fuel innovation and win in the market place against competitors (Junni et al. 2015). A representative example of how deep knowledge and good understanding of the environment can improve strategic agility is Amazon.com. Jeff Bezos, the founder and CEO of Amazon.com, leveraged his deep understanding of the book distribution

business and the remarkable positive impact the internet has had on the business to quickly cope with the various changes happening (Brannen et al. 2012).

Strategic agility is also considered key during transformations and more specifically during mergers and acquisitions (Weber, Y., & Tarba, S. Y. 2014). As it plays a key role in facilitating knowledge transfer which directly impacts acquisition's performance (Junni et al. 2015 & Doz et al. 2010). Strategic agility provides organizations going through transformation with the flexibility needed to make fast and bold decisions and take immediate actions, such as business model and strategy transformation (Doz & Kosonen 2010). Strategic agility provides organizations with the ability to move away from inflexible strategic planning practices and help build the organization's commitment to accept the change and move forward (Junni et al. 2015).

C. Elements of strategic agility

Researchers identified three meta-capabilities for strategic agility; those being strategic sensitivity, organizational resilience and leadership effectiveness (Doz et al. 2010).

Strategic sensitivity is the most important element of agility (Doz et al. 2010). Strategic sensitivity is characterized by the organizations attentiveness to strategic development, leadership harmony especially when making bold and fast decisions, as well as the ability to reshuffle internal resources to successfully transform (Junni et al. 2015 & Doz et al. 2010).

Organizational resilience is another component for strategic agility. Organizational resilience tackles severely disrupting changes which requires instant actions. Organizational design (Weber, Y. 2014) is an enabler of organizational

resilience. Adaptable organization's design help achieve the required structural change and create a flexible and adaptive culture (Tarba, S. Y. 2014).

Effective leadership is the third element of strategic agility. It requires leaders to handle and resolve the tension that results from the two notions of strategic agility. The notion of stability and planning versus the notion of fast decisions and flexibility (Doz et al. 2010). Leaders need to set the right vision and ensure the proper balance between short term success and long term sustainability (Lewis et al. 2014). They should ensure employees have common commitment to accept the change and ensure the right resources exist to execute the change (Weber, Y., & Tarba, S. Y. 2014).

We also opt to study whether culture could be one of the factors impacting agility.

Given that, due to the top management concern of the low agility scores in the headquarters office when compared to other regional offices, a brain storming session was conducted to determine what could be a leading factor to the low agility scores. One of the most interesting things that turned out was the various national employees' cultures in the headquarters office, compared to the dominant national cultures in other regional office. To be able to determine, whether employee's various national cultures have an impact on agility, further overview of culture and national culture will be provided.

D. Definition of culture

Though culture can be examined at various levels, culture is generally defines "as characteristic ways of thinking, feeling and behaving shared among members of an identifiable group" (Gibson & Gibbs, 2006, p. 460). Culture usually refers to a set of

beliefs and values that people hold which guides their decisions and actions (As cited by Stahl et al.2010). Most of the researchers use culture to refer to somewhat steady groups' features that are different from another group. Those features result from shared experiences and major events which are passed on over generations (as cited by Tsui et al.2007). Culture is extremely crucial to human beings as it guides people's thinking and behavior (Giorgi et al. 2015; Tsui et al. 2006; Shore et al.2009).

National culture, on the other hand, refers to people who come from the same geographical area (as cited by Myers & Tan 2003). Those people react, think and solve problems in a similar way given that they have similar values, traditions, beliefs, perception and expectations (as cited by Myers & Tan 2003 & as cited by Tsui et al.2007). National culture is acquired by people at a young age as it is related to the basic values a human holds (Hofstede & Fink 2007). National culture impacts group's behavior and level of group's interaction that is revealed through people's effectiveness, group's performance and productivity, creativity and ability to make decisions (As cited by Shore et al.2009).

Organizational culture, is another type of culture, and it relates to an organizations set of values that guides employees ways of working, thinking and problem solving. Organization's culture is more related to practices which are learned (Hofstede & Fink 2007).

In this project, I will look deeper into the shared cultural values that differentiate different national groups, given that national culture is more embedded in values (Hofstede & Fink 2007).

E. Cultural diversity

The Dubai Headquarters office is one of the most diverse offices across the whole sector. Thus, defining diversity and having an understanding of the impact of diversity on employee was essential.

Cultural diversity in teams is characterized by the different countries, different languages different ethnicities and different values that a group has. Cultural Diversity is believed to have a big impact on the team's performance (Shore et al.2009).

On One hand, cultural diversity might lead to creation of barriers and conflict within groups, due to different ways of communication, favoritism and different values and beliefs (Barinaga 2007). Which lead teams to take much longer time to adapt to organizational changes (Martin 2014).

On the other hand though, cultural diversity might lead to increase in team's productivity, performance and creativity (Stahl et al.2010). Given that diversity brings many different minds together leading to generating more ideas and solutions (Barinaga 2007; Martin 2014).

F. Research question

Based on the above literature and my research context, I will be looking to determine the factors that impact strategic agility in a multinational organization. I also plan to investigate the impact of employee's national cultures on the various elements of agility as defined in the previous section; given that it was one of the main difference identified between the headquarters office and other regional offices. I want to detect the potential role of the diverse national cultures and the perception of the organization's

cultures on our understanding of agility in this organization and the relationship between the two, as well as look into other factors that might impact agility.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

A. Research design

In this paper, I adopted a qualitative single case study method (Stake, 1995) to illustrate the organizational health survey (OHS) results at one of the headquarters offices of a multinational organization in Dubai and determine the factors that impact strategic agility in the headquarters office of a multinational organization.

An insightful research design for qualitative research will require several amendments as the study progress. However, providing a research design at the beginning of the study improves the credibility of the research as well as its accuracy (Yin, 2011). Qualitative studies are not a result of conversations with few respondents. I spent a significant amount of time designing the experimental work, from sample collection to collecting and extensively analysing large volumes of data (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). My access was also facilitated due to the fact that I am an employee in this organization.

B. Sample

Since the purpose of this qualitative research is to analyse a real life event where participants establish the main data sources for the researcher; I made sure to carefully select participants who have experienced the problem, are knowledgeable of the topic and have the willingness to share information and experiences.

The most important selection criteria for building a “participant pool” is to be able to locate potential participants who have experienced the problem (Moustakas, 1994; Polkinghorne, 1989).

I selected a sample size of fourteen participants in line with the qualitative research principle of "less is more" that refers to an acceptable sample size of 8 participants to enable researchers to provide better care of the participants (McCracken 1988, p.17). Seven of my interviewees were female constituting 50% of my sample size. The sample size was purposeful, to provide a full in-depth understanding of the research question and reveal different viewpoints of the problem (Creswell, 2012). It also provided an acceptable representation and a variety of variations of executive levels, ethnicities, age groups and experiences to capture various experiences. Refer to the below Table3.1 and Figure 3.1 for all the demographic details.

Table 3.1. Demographics of participants

Participants	Age	Gender	Managerial Level	Job Function	Years with the Organization	Years in Dubai	Number of Languages spoken	Previous Locations
1	35-40	Female	Executive	HR	5-10	3-5	3	Hong Kong, china
2	40-45	Male	Executive	Finance	5-10	3-5	3	China
3	50+	Male	Sr. Executive	IT	5-10	1-3	2	US, Lebanon
4	40-45	Female	Sr. Executive	HR	5-10	1-3	1	Australia Hong Kong
5	40-45	Male	Sr. Manager	HR	10-15	1-3	2	India
6	30-35	Male	Sr. Manager	HR	3-5	1-3	2	US
7	30-35	Male	Sr. Manager	HR	5-10	1-3	2	Mexico
8	30-35	Female	Executive	Communications	3-5	5-10	3	Qatar, Egypt, UK
9	40-45	Male	Executive	Finance	15-20	3-5	2	Thailand, India
10	40-45	Female	Sr. Manager	HR	3-5	1-3	1	Australia, UK
11	40-45	Female	Executive	Communications	3-5	1-3	2	Hong Kong, US
13	40-45	Female	Sr. Executive	IT	3-5	10+	6	Germany, Latin American, US,
14	3—35	Female	Executive	Marketing	5-10	5-10	2	New Zealand

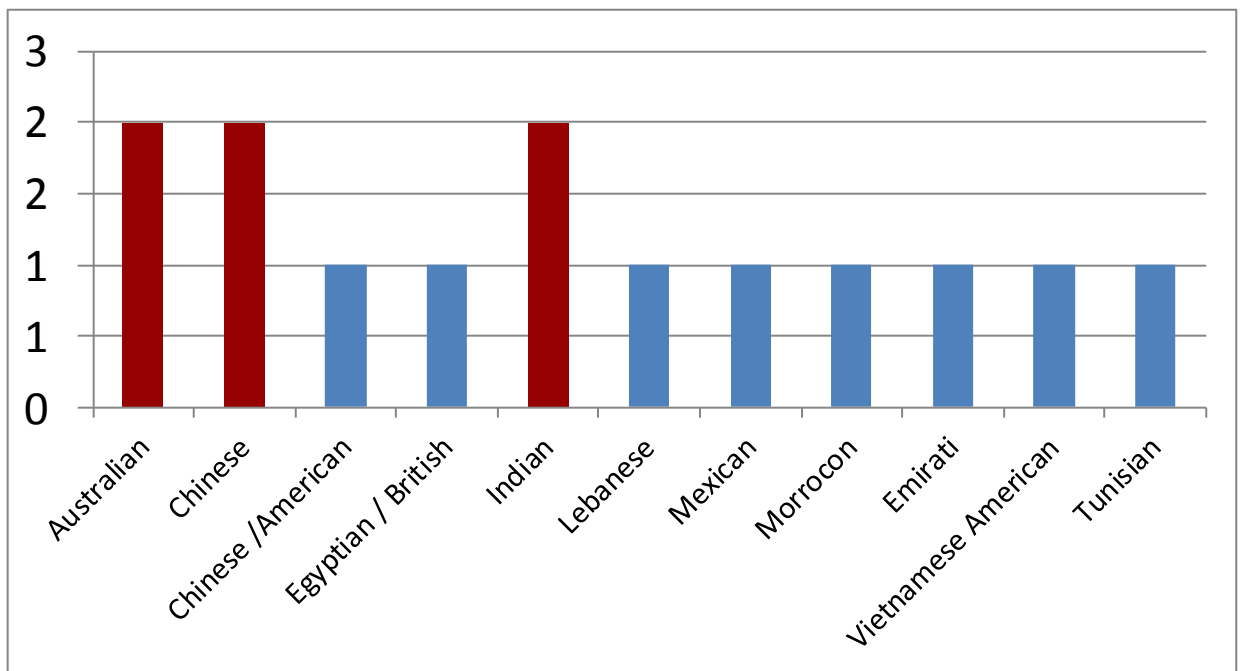


Figure 3.1. Sample composition by ethnicities

C. Data collection

Data collection is a series of related activities to collect worthy information to help answer a research questions (Creswell, 2013). For my case study, I used multiple techniques for data collection, to build a full picture of my case as recommended by Yin, 2009. I used three sources for data collection:

1. Semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions as my primary data collection method. I have used the long interview given it “is one of the most powerful methods in the qualitative armory” (McCracken 1988, p.9). No mean of exploration is more revealing for some of the descriptive and analytic purposes. The long interview helped me in building a better understanding of my participants’ rationale and opinions about the case I was studying and more specifically how participants defined strategic agility and experienced it with respective to the cultural context.
2. Direct observation. I started visiting the Dubai headquarters office during the same period when the OHS started, which provided me with broad knowledge about

different aspects of the office structure and culture. I did my observations during my eight visits to the headquarters office and prior to conducting the interviews.

3. Organization documents. I had access to the organizational health survey results as well as other company correspondence.

Each interview lasted for approximately one hour, which was in line with the long interview time duration guidelines of one or two hours (McCracken, 1988).

The first phase in constructing my qualitative interview questions was conducting an extensive literature review. That guided me into the area that I need to explore and provided me with specific categories and topics to be organized.

Then I looked into my research question and the cultural aspect that I was trying to investigate, to identify what are the cultural categories and relationships I should be looking for that has not been mentioned by the literature. That turned out to be the origin of my question formulation.

I started my interview with a set of demographic questions, to learn more about the participants' lives and experiences. It was extremely important for me that my questions are general and not directive, to allow my participants to engage and respond more freely.

I designed my interviews around specific areas to ensure minimum time wasted and guarantee that my participants feel comfort while discussing the questions during the interview.

In order to build my participant's pool, I reached out to the sector CHRO (chief human resources officer) to seek his approval to get access to the list of my potential participants at the HQ office; after explaining to him the reason for my request and

sharing with him a detailed description of my thesis and all confidentiality procedures to be followed.

Once I got his approval, I reached out to the designated HR (human resources) person and asked her to provide me with the necessary report, which was sent to me by email in a week time and it included (1) name of the employees, (2) grade/level, (3) position/job code title, (4) gender, (5) location country description.

Following that, I asked the office administrative assistant to send the invitation email to participants on behalf of the principle investigator and co-investigator. The email included the purpose of the interview, details about all confidentiality measures and a consent form.

Given that all the interviews were conducted with people employed in the same organization, access to participants' email addresses was convenient. Once I received the emails from interested participants, I started working with them directly to set up a convenient time to conduct the interviews. I selected participants based on two categories (1) cover the criteria of my data sampling which I discussed earlier (2) be physically present in Dubai during my visit that was planned shortly after the email was sent. After finalizing the best suitable time slots for the participants, I sent separate meeting invites from my calendar to ensure meeting times are blocked on participants' calendars. Based on those timings, I connected with the office administrative assistant and asked her to block for me a private conference room for each of the meetings, after sharing with her the date and times of the meetings. I scheduled up to maximum 3 interviews a day, which made be able to complete all fourteen interviews during my 10 days visit to the headquarters office.

At the beginning of the interview, I made sure to provide information to the participants regarding how the results will be reported and the participant's gain from the study as suggested by Bogdan and Biklen (1992). I also made sure to clarify all the confidentiality measures that were taken and explained to the participants the steps I will take to disguise their names in the report. Moreover, I re-emphasized that participation in the interview was completely voluntary and that participants could withdraw from the interview at any point in time without any explanation.

I also did some further research about my participants to have better understanding of their backgrounds and previous work experiences to be well prepared for the interviews. During the interview, I tried to build as much rapport as possible in order to let the participants express their feelings and thought as precise as possible and avoided leading questions. All the participants were introduced to the topic in the invitation letter that was sent to them by email. Most of my questions were open ended questions to ensure I collect all the information I want.

Throughout the interview I kept the interview questions with me to ensure I am covering all the topics in the same order, maintaining the participants focus and capturing the context in which the ideas happen (King & Horrocks, 2010; Mikecz, 2012). I also ensured to balance between formalities and informalities. Formality was revealed through my dress code and the way I introduced myself, which helped me gain the trust of my participants. Informality was revealed through the unstructured conversations which helped me get closer to the respondent's experiences and thoughts. I tried to be less spontaneous in my reaction as to not complicate my interview, given that I knew some of the participants.

The aim of the questions was to gather as much information on the topic as possible, so I avoided asking questions that would have a direct answer of either “yes” or “no”. The questions were developed in a way that will help participants share their thoughts and experiences related to the topic. That later helped the theory to arise from the data rather than imposing a structure on the participants.

At any point during the interview when I noticed that the participants were speaking in general terms and not providing me with sufficient input and precise answers, I would ask more questions to illustrate my question or even rephrase my question after listening carefully to what the participants have said to ensure I am collecting the most targeted and related input. For example, when respondents start talking about the organization in general, I would ask: “can you describe the situation in the headquarters office in specific?” In some cases I was more forthcoming and asked participants about their exact meaning (ex. What do you mean by organization’s culture)?

I was also very cautious not to engage in “active listening” (McCracken, 1988). So as not to direct my participants into a specific direction, which might prevent me of capturing the participant’s logic, such as telling my participants “I believe this is what you wanted to say.”

My participants were generally very cooperative and honest. All interviews were audio taped with the participants’ permission. At the end of the interview, I thanked the participants for their time.

D. Data analysis

I was very conscious throughout my data analysis to ensure no personal biases exist. “The data must bear the weight of any interpretation, so the researcher must constantly confront his or her own opinions and prejudices with the data” (Conklin, 2007, p. 42). Throughout my analysis I tried to build an in-depth understanding of the real life setting of my case (Yin, 2009).

The following subdivisions describe how I analysed my Data.

- Step 1: I developed a transcript of the interviews by listening carefully to each and every interview. At many times I had to listen to the same interview several times, to ensure that my transcription is precise. That happened after a week of all the Interviews.

Given that the aim of a case study is to discover a real-life, current case over time, through a thorough data collection (McCracken 1988), I read each transcript and tried to grasp a sense of the whole. At this stage I replaced the names of all participants with fictitious name, to ensure the participant’s confidentiality as well as focus on the information they have provided me as advised by (Bazeley and Jackson 2013). This helped me to minimize any conscious or unconscious influence during my analysis.

- Step 2: I organized my data, sorting out the important information from the unimportant. At this stage, I was just getting a sense of the whole interview and trying to classify key ideas and elements.

The importance of these key ideas lies in assisting me to identify general key elements from the information provided by the participants. There are no strict directions on the way to detect general key elements (King & Horrocks, 2010). I

used an excel sheet where I have transformed my data to organize, classify and later analyse it. I started the analysis as I was building in the table early on during the data collecting phase, as recommended by Miles and Huberman (1994).

Then I began forming codes (broad-codes and specific-codes), through moving into detailed descriptions, classification and interpretation of the data (McCracken, 1988). Throughout my analysis I linked the codes with related examples. This helped me better understand the participant's interest in a code (Asmussen & Creswell, 1995). The code names I have selected were the best that described the information and which I leveraged later to develop themes, some of which I have expected to find prior to the study and others were totally surprising to me.

- Step 3: After completing the identification of categories (broad-codes and specific-codes), I proceeded into identifying themes. I was able to identify six major themes which consisted of several broad-codes, the broad-codes consisted of specific-codes and the specific-codes consisted of data.

For that, I have created a separate excel table to show the relationship between the themes, broad-codes, specific-codes and data (Appendix B1). This has allowed me to read the entire comments regarding different independent variables of agility irrespective of where the comments happened in the interview.

- Step 4: One of the final steps in data analysis, is having a broader understanding of the data. I tried to link the themes and broad codes that emerged from my findings to the broader literature review. I developed naturalistic generalizations (McCracken, 1988) from that, which helped me answer my research questions and develop further personal findings.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

A. General findings

In this section I present, an overview of the research findings and the general themes that emerged. Analysis of the data helped me come up with the below six themes and broad – codes, (Table B1 is a summary of the themes, codes and sub-codes):

The multinational corporate culture and nature of the organization were key factors impacting strategic agility. The head office structure and nature of the organizational unit resulted in lower strategic agility when compared to market base offices. Leadership profile also emerged as being another factor impacting strategic agility. Organizational diversity played a marginal role but not as significant as the other factors.

B. Multinational corporate culture

The first theme that emerged from my findings was the multinational corporate culture that included the organizational practices, norms, decisiveness and undocumented values. Participants described the organization as being overly risk-averse in decision making. The organization was characterized by having an overly political culture. Employees tend to agree with whatever people they are working with want, especially if those people are in more senior positions, even when they don't believe it is in the best benefit of the business. Employees do not take ownership over their work which leads in many instances to delay in the business progress. Employees

and managers tend to use positive statements to deliver unpleasant news; a technique known as sandwiching, resulting in less transparency in the organization. Moreover, the current performance appraisal system evaluates and recognizes individuals based on their individual accomplishment rather than team's performance. That leads employees to focus more on achieving individual goals vs. team goals, which further slows down decision making and obstruct organizational progress. For example some participants reported "we don't work in task forces, we are more geared toward individual work" and "we do not view ourselves as business owners".

C. Nature of the organization

The nature of the organization was the second theme that emerged and it included the organizational mission, financial model and organization status.

Participants believed that smaller size and start-up organizations respond faster to changes given their simple organizational structure. Participants reported that the organizational large size and big brands were slowing down the decision making process. The organization's financial model was also reported to be a factor hindering the organization's ability to react fast to changes. Participants described the organization's financial planning process as being overly complicated. The plan though initially developed for a five year period, is updated on a yearly basis which dismisses opportunities to derive any major insights regarding to changing market trends. As cited by some of the participants, "We do not need a yearly strategic plan; we should stick to our five years plan and only do some minor updates every year. By changing our strategic plan on a yearly basis we are missing on the opportunity to effectively plan for the future".

The organizational profile, being a public organization, was a major factor that directed the organization's focus towards the short term goals. As cited by several participants:

“We are geared to deliver revenue and NOBIT to our shareholders”

“We are limited and handcuffed by the ambition to maintain quarter by quarter growth”

“To make more long term plans and take innovative decisions we might need to incur some losses on the short term, which we can't do”

“We focus more on the short term because we can't make huge investments that might impact our cash flow and impact our dividends”.

D. Head office structure

The head office structure was the third theme that emerged. The broad codes under the head office structure theme included, span of control, matrix setup, organizations design, processes and procedures.

The new organizational structure was described as being the driving factor contributing to slow responses. The structure was characterized by having too many layers leading to increased levels of alignment, too many stakeholders and undefined processes. Example from what participants shared “No clear processes on how to operate in the new structure existed”. The structure was executed in a very short time, prior to finalizing the operating model and DICE (Decide, Inform, Consult, Execute) resulting in undefined roles and responsibilities and dilution of decision making and accountability. As cited by some participants “Now everyone is responsible for everything”.

Participants also believed that some functions were inadequately staffed while others were overly staffed. Thus, adding to the manager's workload load, as they currently manage work groups that span across different businesses, geographies and functions.

Moreover, the new organizational design was believed to result in a hierarchal structure with decision making authorities centred at higher levels of the hierarchy. Example of what some of the participants shared, "we need to align our leadership team prior to taking any decision" and "Employees do not have control over decision making and how things are done".

Ten out of the fourteen participants reported the lack of the organizations ability to re-allocate resources effectively, which hindered the organizations ability to promptly respond to changes. Participants explained that the technique was only being implemented on a very small scale and within the same function and not across functions.

Participants believed that the organization's diverse portfolio, its various work streams, unclear processes and undefined categories for positions and critical experiences as the main factors hindering the organization from leveraging the resource re-allocation technique. They shared their views on the good job the consultancy firms such as McKinsey & Company and other organizations such as Netflix are doing on re-allocating resources. Having the same work stream makes resource allocation in such organizations much more feasible.

Participants also believed that other organizational norms hindered the organizational ability to leverage resource re-allocation, such as the employee's tendency to focus on their individual work versus the whole team work and the

manager's inclination to hold on to their team members. As one of the participants explained "everybody wants to keep their resources".

Eleven out of the fourteen participants did not find the new flatter structure in the regional office headquarters as an enabler to responding faster to changes happening, due to all the above mentioned factors.

E. Nature of the organizational unit

The fourth theme that emerged was the nature of the organizational unit, which includes the organizational unit set up and its role. Participants reported variations in the responsive capabilities between regions and the Sector HQ office. Participants believe that regions are faster at responding to external changes due to their structural set up. Regions are operating businesses with teams placed closer to the markets. That provides employees with better industry and market awareness. Regions also need to react fast to any market changes to ensure they are ahead of their competition.

Participants also highlighted that less alignment is required at a regional level vs. the headquarters office which also helps in speeding things up. Similarly, the headquarters office was reported to have numerous global & corporate guidelines unlike the regions which limits the HQ office leaders' abilities to take fast decisions.

Participants reported major staffing challenges as a result of the unclear procedures. Some function which were key to the organizations strategic growth were inadequately staffed, (ex. Nutrition, e-commerce), while other functions were overly staffed. As cited by some of the participants "we need to plan our resources more effectively to match the growing markets' needs".

F. Leadership profile

The leadership profile was the fifth theme that emerged. It included both leader's soft skills and technical skills, which were believed to have a significant impact on strategic agility. Participants believed that leaders should acquire a specific style and characteristics. Leaders should have the ability to take fast and bold decisions and be more decisive. Leaders should create an organizational culture that encourages taking risks and making mistakes to enable learning.

Ten out of the fourteen participants reported that the sector headquarters leaders are not hurrying up taking decisions.

Eight out of the fourteen participants reported that the decisions being taken to respond to changing circumstances are not bold & not risky. Example of some of the participant's comment

“We are sure not hurrying up taking decisions, those decisions should have been done earlier and completed faster such as smart spending, POM, Nutrition”.

“We did not hurry up taking those decisions on the contrary, we were late taking them, they should have been taken years ago when we were in good times and the sun was shining”.

“We are only taking those decisions now because we are facing cost pressures”.

Eight out of the fourteen participants reported that the headquarters leadership team have the right level of awareness and attentiveness to strategic development. Participants described the headquarters leadership team as one who walk the talk, lead the journey and provide the right examples and success stories. Despite all the global guidelines, the leadership team is doing the best they can with things that are within their control. Most of the leaders were described as being strategic, especially those who

have been with the organization for long. However, the data showed that there were some variations in the level of strategic focus between regional and headquarter leaders. Participants believed that regional leaders are more knowledgeable of external changes given they are closer to the markets and leading some of the innovations. Participants emphasized on the need for leaders to have extensive market knowledge, provide clear directions on the hard calls and be able to take the right calls at the right times. Leaders should have the ability to set the right vision and ensure proper balance between short term success and long term sustainability.

Participants praised the leadership strategic thinking abilities; however, eight out of the fourteen respondents reported that the headquarters office leadership was not ensuring the right balance between short term success and long term sustainability.

Participants explained that during times of uncertainty, similar to these times, leaders focus more on the short term to be able to deliver on the organization's annual plans.

Participants strongly believe that it is the leader's responsibility to manage employees through time of change. Eight out of the fourteen participants believed, that the sector head quarter office leaders have managed employees change in an effective way. Participants recognized leaders' efforts and dedication on ensuring key messages communicated.

However, some participants believed leaders could have better managed employee's commitment toward accepting the changes and creating a more flexible culture, through ensuring higher levels of transparency and better engagement with the middle management teams.

Participants shared that many employees still do not recognize the benefits of the latest structural changes and still do not understand how the previously communicated change objectives were achieved. As cited by some of the participants, “Leaders did not win the hearts of the people” and “The middle management teams should have been brought on-board much earlier in the change process to ensure a smoother transformation”. Participants explained that it was that layer of management who eventually lead the change, thus they should have been more equipped to successfully do that.

Participants shared the need for leaders to model the new behaviours. Although many leaders were walking the talk, some leaders still openly criticized some of the changes taking place, impacting the employee’s acceptance levels.

Participants also reported the numerous changes that have occurred consecutively during the last couple of years to have lead people to not fully accept the changes. As some of the participants shared, “People are not getting the required time to settle”.

Most of the participants agreed on the need for leaders to streamline and standardize current processes, define accountability to enable faster and bolder decisions.

G. Diversity

Organizational diversity was the sixth theme that emerged. The headquarters office was described as being the most diverse office in the whole sector. Aside from the several advantages that diversity can bring to the workplace, which includes increase in creativity, better innovation and enhanced performance. Participants believed that

diversity had in some instances caused communication and engagement challenges, due to the different workstyles resulting in delays in decision making and responding fast to changes.

Participants overall believed that the organization is currently in the reactive mode. Example of what some of the participants shared “We only react under pressure, when we have no other option and when things need to be done in a short time frame” and “We should have invested heavier in portfolio transformation earlier than we did, we could have been more pro-active to this rather than being reactive.”

Understanding my participant’s perception of strategic agility was necessary, to be able to provide further analysis to my case study and answer my research question.

Participants’ profile was very diverse. Participants had different national origins, cultures, ethnicities and different experiences. Although participants provided varying definitions for strategic agility, they all agreed that “speed” and “empowerment to take decisions” were the two components critical to agility. Speed in doing everything at an organizational level, from taking decisions to execution.

Among the definitions provided were, the ability to capture opportunities, address challenges with clarity of purpose and transparency, trust others, have a steady progress, be more locally relevant, have an outside perspective as well as having the willingness to take risks and make mistakes, be responsive, nimble, proactive and flexible. Example of how participants viewed strategic agility “To me agility is about having the ability to capture opportunities and address the challenges faster than our competition. I see that in companies that succeed in introducing new products before their competition to react to change and remain leaders in their markets”.

Participants rated agility in the headquarters office as low. They rated agility based on the three meta-capabilities described in the literature. Strategic agility was ranked as 2.3 on a scale from 1 to 5; (1) being the lowest and (5) being the highest. Participants also shared their interpretations of the reasons that lead the headquarters office to score the lowest on the agility related questions in the latest organizational health survey in comparison to all other regions in the sector.

As previously discussed, the headquarters office matrix structure, nature of the organizational unit and the numerous global and corporate guidelines were among the factors that participants highlighted. Participants also revealed that the headquarters office hosted the biggest number of leaders in one location, which required more alignments and resulted in slowing down the decision making process.

Additionally, the variation in results was mainly described to be the result the unique multi-cultural employee composition in the headquarters office compared to more uni-cultural one in the region offices.

An interesting point shared by some of the participants, viewed the difference in scoring to be simply a result of some cultural values. Participants explained that employees originating from countries with high power distance rate higher on such surveys. This is due to the hierarchal national culture and the respect people have to those in power. People are unlikely to rate their organizations low as it contradicts with their national cultural norms. As mentioned in the literature, “employees with high power distance might be less likely to speak out against inequities” (Johnson & Carland, 2007).

It was also imperative to understand how my participants perceive their agility levels. For that, participants were asked to rate themselves on a scale of 1 to 5; (1) being

the lowest and (5) being the highest. The scores results ranged between 2.5 and 4. All participants agreed that they are agile, when dealing with things they have direct control on. Example of what some of the participants shared “We are agile within our circle of influence and control”. Alignment, having too many priorities and employees national cultures were among the top factors that participants believed hindered their ability to be agile. Some of the participants explained their slow decision making process to be a result of their national cultural norms, which does not encourage taking risks. While others, who were faster at making decisions and considered themselves more agile; recognized the impact of their national culture in encouraging people to speak up and take risks.

The last section of my interviews was related to Diversity. The participants I had interviewed came from ten different countries and had more than ten different ethnicities.

I asked my participants to describe their national countries profiles against the following four dimensions: power distance, uncertainty avoidance, feminism vs. masculine and individualism vs. collectivism (Hofstede & Fink 2007).

Several of the countries were described to have similar national cultural dimensions.

The most high power distance countries were: China, Vietnam India, Egypt & Mexico. Italy, United Arabs Emirates, Tunisia, Lebanon & Hong Kong were described as moderate. The most low power distance countries were: US, Australia, France & the United Kingdom. The most high uncertainty avoidance countries with high tolerance of uncertainty were: India, Vietnam, Lebanon, Egypt & Tunisia. Hong Kong, US, Mexico, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, French & Morocco were balanced. The most

low uncertainty avoidance countries were Australia & China. The most Masculine countries were China, Egypt, Vietnam, United Arab Emirates & Lebanon. India, French, United Kingdom Morocco, Mexico, Tunisia, US, Italy & Hong Kong were balanced. The most feminine country was Australia. The most collectivist countries were: China, Vietnam, Hong Kong, Lebanon, Egypt, India, Mexico, Tunisia & Italy. French, Morocco & the United Arab Emirates were balanced. The most individualistic countries were: Australia, US & the United Kingdom.

Twelve out of the fourteen participants reported that their national culture does not align with the organization's culture. Some of the participants reported that it took them around six months when moving to the headquarters office to adapt to the office culture. Those were mainly people moving from uni-cultural country offices such as India and China. However, others who have relocated moving from more diverse offices such as the US, found it easier to blend quickly in the new headquarters culture.

Most of the participants interviewed believed that diversity added numerous benefits to the organization. Diversity helped individuals broaden their knowledge, build awareness and get an outside perspective. That resulted in better idea generation, enhanced listening skills, better negotiation skills and enhanced productivity.

On the other hand, some of the participants shared some of the challenges that resulted from having such a diverse team. The organization's diversity had in some instances created pockets of cultures and silos, which limited the sharing of information. It led to communication challenges, given that people took longer time to figure out how to work together, which resulted in slowing things down. Example of what participants have shared, "In the HQ office, I see some cultures dominating the conversations during meetings, while other cultures remaining silent as they are less assertive."

Diversity made it more difficult to build relationships at some times, as it took employees more time to understand why others behaved in a certain ways that were different than theirs.

Participant's view on whether diversity enhances organization's strategic agility varied. Some agreed that diversity enhances agility given the diverse cultures, views points and experiences gathered together. However, others believed that having many nationalities working together hinders agility, given the different work styles and work ethics. Therefore, the need to build guidance around respecting other cultures and guidelines on how to communicate and engage with people coming from different cultures was viewed as key to ensuring diversity does not become a challenge.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Reflections

I initially looked at the interviews outcome analysis and matched them to the literature review. I started by looking into the analysis of the first section of the interviews, which was built based on the strategic agility three meta-capabilities previously shared.

First, I looked at organizational resilience, which included the organization's ability of anticipating change, the level of responsiveness to severely disruptive changes and the organization's design. When looking at the responses, participants believed that the organization was doing a good job at anticipating change in general. Especially with the "performance with purpose" efforts that are directed towards creating a healthier portfolio by reducing added sugars, saturated fat and salt in many of the organizations products, while continuing to expand the line-up of nutritious foods and beverages. Eight out of the fourteen participants described the overall organizations capability at anticipating change as being good. However, participants believed that the organizations capability at responding fast especially in the headquarters office is inadequate, as reported by Eleven out of fourteen participants.

Participants reported that the organization was not able to recognize the benefits of the new implemented structure and the flatter organization due to executional challenges.

Second, I looked at strategic sensitivity which included leaders' levels of awareness and attentiveness to strategic development, their ability to take fast, bold and risky decisions and the ability to reshuffle organizations resources. Participants rated positively the leaders' level of awareness and attentiveness; however they rated the leader's ability to take fast, bold and risky decisions and leaders' ability to reshuffle resources as low.

Finally, I looked at Leadership effectiveness that is characterized by the leadership's ability to balance between short and long term planning, ensuring employees commitment to accept changes and ensuring the right resources available to execute the changes. Participant's responses revealed the lack of leader's ability to balance between short and long term planning and the lack of ensuring sufficient resources. However they positively described the leader's ability to manage employee's commitment towards accepting changes.

The above ratings revealed that the sector HQ office had scored positively on only two of the sub-components of strategic agility. All other sub-components were scored low. There were no surprises in those findings. Those findings reflected what was proposed by the literature earlier and explained the low agility scores in the OHS at the sector HQ. The sector HQ has scored low given it lacked most of the strategic agility meta-capabilities. However, when conducting further investigations to apprehend the factors that led to the variation in scores between the sector HQ and the regions the below additional observations and finding emerged:

1. Employees' national cultures had no impact on strategic agility. The responses showed that the low strategic agility was a function of the *undocumented* head office organizational culture. An example of some of the responses: "We are all formatted

the same way and that is very dangerous”. Irrespective of national cultures the undocumented office culture overshadowed the employee’s national culture. Employees originating from countries with low power distance, such as Australia, that entitles people to challenge top leaders, speak openly and take action individually, are not able to demonstrate their full cultural norms due to the ruling organizational culture. Employees were still required to seek numerous alignments prior to taking any decision, which hindered their agility. National culture overruled throughout informal conversations and activities.

However, the data showed variations within one single ethnicity. Responses from participants of the same culture varied tremendously. Some saw the headquarter office agility levels as moderate while others saw it as extremely low.

2. Employees having international experience viewed themselves as very agile, however they viewed the head office to be not enough agile as per their standards. That was totally different for employees who did not have any international experience outside of their home countries. Those employees viewed themselves and the office as being somehow agile. Further analysis to the data revealed that employees who had more than one international experience and who spoke more than one language were much more agile than those who had no international experience. International experience was revealed to be critical in building a more flexible mind-set. As cited by some of the participants “International experience builds higher levels of tolerance and thoughtfulness”. People with no international experience needed more time to adapt to the new culture and accept people’s different views and ideas, which delayed their responses and decisions. However, it was much easier for those with international experience to blend in. They welcomed

others differences and appreciated conflicting views which prompted faster decisions.

3. Gender and age of employees were not factors in determining agility. Employees from different age groups reported similar levels of agility. While varying levels of agility were reported within the same age groups. Similarly, there was a big difference in responses between employees from the same gender.

B. Contributions and future implications

This research analysed the components of strategic agility and outcomes of this paper showed the importance of the organization's undocumented culture, organization's profile and organization's set up on strategic agility.

It provided better understanding of the elements of the undocumented organization's culture and setup that hinders strategic agility – How do organization practices, norms and undocumented values impact the level of responsiveness in organizations. Similarly, how organization's structure and organization's nature hinder the speed of taking fast decisions.

This paper contributes to strategic agility literature in two ways. First, the main contribution of this research is shedding the light on some components that were overlooked by the literature. The components are undocumented organizations culture and organization structure and organization's nature.

Second, this work introduced a new methodological approach through using an analysis of organization's strategic agility- namely case study- to gain insights into the cultural aspect that is impacting agility.

Future research can use more qualitative research to clarify the impact of the undocumented organization's culture on strategic agility, at similar organizations to determine if this is more organization/context specific or consistent with industry practice.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

SUGGESTED INTERVIEW GUIDE

Topic	Suggested Questions
<p>Opening questions: Understanding more about employees' cultures and background</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How many years have you been with our organization? 2. Where were you located previously within PepsiCo or with another organization? 3. How many years have you been in Dubai: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Under 1 year ii. 1 – 2 years iii. 3 -5 years iv. 5-7 years v. 7 – 9 years vi. More than 10 years 4. Number of Languages you speak: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> vii. 1 viii. 2 ix. 3 x. More than 3 5. What is your home country
<p>Organizational Resilience: Questions about the organization's ability to anticipate change and react to it</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With these changes happening all the time, how do you think are we doing on anticipating change? How do you think of our change anticipation capabilities in the headquarters? Can you give me examples of when we did a good job at anticipating change? Can you give me examples of when we did a bad job at anticipating change? How are we doing compared to other regions? • In the content of severely disruptive change how would you describe the level of our responsiveness to change at the AMENA HQ? • What are the factors that impacted our level of responsiveness? • What helped us to be more responsive or what prevented us from being more responsive? • What regions do you think we compare to the most in the level of responsiveness? • In your opinion what other regions are more responsive or less responsive than us? And what factors have helped in that?

Topic	Suggested Questions
Strategic Sensitivity Questions about the organization's resource allocation capabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During times of change and especially during transformations, resource allocation is required. Do you know of any event where we re-allocated resources to meet the need of the change? • Do we utilize the technique of re-allocating resources to manage internal changes and transformations? • How often do we utilize this technique? • Has it proven helpful in the past? • Do you think it is widely used to responding to change in the external environment how so? Can you please elaborate?
Questions about Leadership Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you think of our leadership's ability at ensuring the right balance between short term success and long term sustainability? • What did they do that might have contributed to the success? What did they do that might have led to the failure? How can they improve it? • Where they able to manage employees commitment to accepting the change and creating a flexible culture? What did they do that led to that? What they can do different to ensure employee's commitment in accepting the change?
Questions about the recent structural changes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recently we have changed our structure moving to a more flat organization, did this help us deal better with the disruptive changes happening? How is that? Can you provide me with some examples?
Strategic Sensitivity : Strategic attentiveness Questions about leaders level of awareness and attentiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you describe the level of awareness and attentiveness our leadership team has to strategic developments? How are they compared to other regions?
Strategic Sensitivity Questions about the Organizations ability to take fast and bold decisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you think were we hurrying up taking those decisions or were we going slowly? • Were those decisions risky? What made that decision risky? What in your opinion lead that leader to take those decisions although they were risky? Would you qualify us as high, medium or low at risk taking? • How would you rate AMENA HQ in comparison to other regions in taking fast and bold decisions? What can we do to enhance the speed and boldness/riskiness of our decision making? How can our leadership contributes to that?

Topic	Suggested Questions
Questions about agility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What comes to your head when I say agility? • Ok, let me share with you the definition of agility: which is the ability of organizations to sense opportunities and react quickly to changing circumstances. Researchers identified three meta-capabilities for strategic agility; those being strategic sensitivity, organizational resilience and leadership effectiveness. • Based on the above definition and on a scale from 1 to 5 how would you rate the agility in our AMENA HQ? • How do you think we scored on the agility scale in our latest OHS? If they say high, what do you think contributed to our high scores? If they say low, what do you think led to our low scores? • Do you consider yourself agile?
Questions about Diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you describe for me your country/national culture? • How does it align or contradict with our organizational culture? • How long do you think it will take you to align your national culture to our organization culture? What is necessary for you to adapt to our organizational culture? • What our organization can do to help you adapt your national culture to the organizational culture? • As you already know our AMEAN HQ is very diverse, how would you describe this diversity in regards to other offices or regions? • What do you think holds stronger in our AMENA HQ, the organizational culture or employee's national culture? What do you think contribute to that? and what can the organization do to either reinforce or resolve for that? • Do you think that the many nationalities we have at our Dubai HQ affect our organizational culture? Does it affect anything else? • How do you think this diversity impacts Positively or negatively: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The speed and boldness of our decision making? • Strategic thinking? • Any other ways you can think of?

APPENDIX II

SUMMARY OF THEMES, BROAD-CODES, SPECIFIC CODES OF WHAT WAS PROVIDED BY THE PARTICIPANTS

Themes	Broad Codes	Specific Codes
Multinational Corporate Culture	Organizational Practice	Cautious behavior
		Operating in the comfort zone
		Risk Aversion
		Lack of Empowerment
	Norms	No bold moves
		Political behavior
		Performance appraisal focused on individual results
		Internal Competitive behavior
	Decisiveness	Decisions take so long to be taken
	Undocumented Values	Sandwiching Bad News
Failure syndrome		
Nature of the Organization	Organizational mission	Geared to deliver revenue and NOBIT to shareholders
	Financial model	Ambition to maintain quarter by quarter growth
		No investments are made that impact cash growth and dividends
		Need to deliver on P&L
		Focus on short term plans specially during tough economic times
		Cost managed year by year
		Aim to maintaining dividends, limits organizations ability of making huge investments
	Organization status	Large organization (Size) with big brands
		Publicly listed organization
	HQ Office Structure	Span of Control
Too many levels of approvals		
No ownership of decision making		
Matrix Setup		Complicated reporting lines
		Too many direct reports
		People are far from markets they are responsible for
Organization Design		Too many layers
		Hierarchal
		Increased work load
Processes		Roles, responsibilities and dice are not clear
		Employees do not know who is doing what
		Processes are not streamlined nor structured
Procedures		Resource allocation challenges
		Some functions are over staffed and others that are critical to the business are under staffed

Themes	Broad Codes	Specific Codes
Nature of Organizational Unit	Organizational Unit Set up	HQ is not an operating business
		HQ is not close to the field
		HQ has no P&L to deliver against
		Too much Corporate & Global guidance
	Role of Organizational Unit	Employees provide consulting, feedback and coaching
		HQ provides strategic direction
Leadership Profile	Soft Skills	Less resistance to change
		Moving faster in implementing changes
		Taking faster & bolder calls
		Strategic thinking
		Have a balanced internal vs. external focus
		Balance between short term and long term plans
		Communication Skills
		Transparent discussions
	Engaging managerial levels who are driving the change and ensuring messages well cascaded to the lower levels	
	Technical Skills	Better Market Knowledge
		Having a business mindset
Organizational Diversity	Workstyles	People from Different cultures work differently
		People tend to be less decisive when working with several cultures
		Different cultures might lead team members from the same national cultures to work in silos
	Engagement	Different work behaviors makes it more difficult to connect and agree on things
		It takes longer to build relationships with different cultures
		Different cultures lead to having many different perspectives

APPENDIX III

LETTER REQUESTING PARTICIPATION

This email is sent on behalf of Dr. Yusuf Sidani, Professor at AUB

You are invited to participate in a research study about the impact of employee's multi-culture on organization agility part of the thesis project for **Dalal Alameh, the change & communication lead for the AMENA IT function**, part of her Master's degree program in Human Resource Management at the American University of Beirut. The purpose of the study is to investigate the OHS results and more specifically examine the agility related questions which scored the lowest in the AMENA headquarters, in comparison to other regional offices.

You will be asked to participate in an interview, to get your perceptions for the current results and to explore the potential antecedents of organizational agility or its lack therefore. This study will provide you a comparison between your experience and the collective experience of other executives without revealing the identity of any of the other executives. You will also learn about barriers and enablers about all managerial skills toolkit.

The approximate time to complete the interview is 90 minutes.

The Interview will either be conducted in person in the Dubai headquarters or over skype. A private setting will be secured for the face to face semi interviews to assure privacy of participants and confidentiality of data; similarly all skype interviews will be in a private place on the AUB campus with no one other than yourself and the researcher listening to the conversation.

Please read the consent form that is attached in this email for your records only, to provide you with the necessary information and details about all confidentiality measures for you to make an informed decision regarding whether you want to participate in the interview. The consenting process will take place during the face to face semi interview or before the skype interview.

If you decide to participate in this research study kindly send an email to the co-investigator (Dalal Alameh, Dna26@aub.edu.lb) informing her of your decision, she will then work with you to schedule time that best works for you. If you have any questions about this interview, you may contact: Yusuf Sidani, PhD, ys01@aub.edu.lb.

Thank you & Best regards

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