Call for Papers
Special Issue European Management Journal 2013
Managerial and Organizational Cognition:
Implications for Business and Management in Europe

The Guest Editor invited for this special issue is:
Thomas WRONA, Hamburg University of Technology

Research enquiries into the cognitive nature of business strategy have become increasingly prominent in strategic management. The most fundamental assumption in this approach is that organizational processes and more specifically strategic processes are mediated and influenced by the mental models and cognitive processes of the strategist. It is therefore of high interest to investigate how managers perceive and process information and especially how and why certain information is attributed strategic importance from which strategic actions are derived. This means, on the one hand, opening the managerial ‘black box’ by analyzing cognitive structures and processes used by senior managers in the strategy process, i.e. their beliefs about the environment, the strategy, the business portfolio and the state of the organization and on the other hand, examining the relationship between individual cognition and behavior and understanding how collective cognition emerges in organizations.

The various research contributions to this area have led to a widening of the scope in the field. This has resulted in a call for more clarity and for a stronger integration of parallel research developments from related disciplines. Contributions from other disciplines, such as social and organizational psychology, sociology, strategy-as-practice studies and strategic management, as well as the application of new methods in the field, are particularly welcome in order to strengthen a multi-disciplinary approach to managerial and organizational cognition within strategic processes.

This special issue aims at making a contribution to managerial and organizational cognition and beyond, by inviting manuscripts that theorize European context and/or present robust methods to capture the influence of European context cognition. Papers focusing on the role of social and situated cognition within small groups and/or organizational units are especially welcome as are both conceptual and empirical papers. Possible topics include but are not limited to the following areas or questions:

**Cognitive psychology in business administration and management**

Literature reviews and state-of-the-art papers, which will encourage the debate about the role of cognitive psychology within business administration and management, and which discuss theoretical and empirical challenges for future research are especially welcome. The same applies to papers dealing with the differences of cognitions e.g. regarding the formulation and implementation stages of strategy processes or the differences between strategic and organizational planning, as well as operational decision making processes.
Intra-organizational and collective cognitions with specific focus on European Multinational Companies (EMNC)

Organizational work today is more and more centered on or involves collaborative efforts. Thus, a particular interest concerns the investigation of collective cognition and shared knowledge in teams, as well as different organizational and/or functional units with a specific focus on EMNC. EMNC are facing special challenges to formulate and implement an overall strategy, when considering the different, often widely scattered, subsidiaries. Thus papers focusing on the question how far the perception or interpretation of the overall company’s strategy or general organizational issues is alike across its different subsidiaries are invited. Moreover, contributions analyzing the nature of social interactions in strategic decision making groups and the role of these interactions for the development of shared perceptions or common interpretations of organizational and strategic issues would be valuable. Do teams actually need to have such common mental models in order to accomplish their tasks successfully? What are the implications (advantages and challenges) deriving from deliberately assigned ‘cognitive diversity’ for example when developing new product or innovation management or deriving from different perceptions of management accounting structures (especially performance measures, e.g. different interpretations of “ROI”, etc.)?

The role of contextual factors on cognition – The European environment

Research has only recently started to pay attention to the role of the social and environmental contexts in which managerial and organizational cognitions are embedded. In light of the increasing importance of firms’ international business activities and the fact that even companies that so far had focused solely on their domestic markets are no longer exempt from global influences, national culture is treated more and more explicitly as a crucial variable in both management research and practice. Here then, research evidence exists which points out that, among other factors, culture clearly impacts on managerial and organizational cognition. Thus contributions which take a cross-cultural perspective are invited: In how far do managers in different (European) countries vary e.g. in terms of their perceptions and/or interpretations of organizational ‘threats’ and ‘opportunities’? Is it possible to explain differences of the degree of risk-aversion versus risk-seeking behaviors or different preferences for long-term versus short-term planning perspectives based on cultural influences? Contributions following an intercultural perspective are equally of interest: In many organizations an increasing number of work teams or task forces are today found that are composed of members with often quite divergent cultural backgrounds. How is it possible to reconcile the different cognitions in an increasingly diverse workforce? How can firms and managers best take advantage of this cultural cognitive diversity?

Research methods

Research on cognition is characterized by a clear emphasis on dimensionalizing and mapping cognitive structures that give meaning to the environment. Until today there has been enormous effort in finding ways to analyze these hard to measure contents of the strategic mind. To further advancing the opening of the managerial black box examples and suggestions of ‘innovative’ methods to investigate some of the questions mentioned above are of particular interest. Chances but also limits associated with the use of specific research methods/tools in cognitive research can
also be discussed. Moreover, papers could deal with issues of reliability and validity of the methods employed.

**Practical implications**

Taking a practical point of view, researchers are encouraged to think about ways of how the adaptation of a cognitive perspective could assist managers in their daily operations. Which insights by researchers in managerial and organizational cognition are particularly valuable and actionable for practical purposes? Which of the plurality of tools used by researchers in the field is also feasible to be used by practitioners? How could group mapping techniques assist in strategy formulation, considering the fact that individual knowledge structures of the team members are made transparent in a comparative juxtaposition? Based on these insights and the open pooling of individuals’ knowledge, the group is then able to work out a common perception and like that to make the most of its prevailing cognitive diversity.

The guest editor invited for this special issue is Thomas Wrona, Professor and Director of the Institute for Strategic & International Management at the Hamburg University of Technology, Germany. All submissions will be subject to the usual double-blind peer-review process of EMJ and should respect the general publication guidelines of the journal. All submissions should be submitted electronically to http://ees.elsevier.com/emj/ until 31st January 2013

The European Management Journal (EMJ) is a generalist, academic review covering all fields of management including, but not limited to business ethics, business strategy, entrepreneurship & innovation, information systems, international business & cross-cultural studies, marketing, organization studies & general management as well as supply chain & operations management. The EMJ aims to present the latest thinking and research on major management topics in form of articles that meet high academic quality standards, while still being accessible to non-specialists. Interdisciplinary research and cross-functional issues are particularly favored. The Journal takes a broad view of business and management and encourages submissions from other disciplines if they contribute significantly to problems considered by managers and researchers. The EMJ is a peer-reviewed journal, with a "double-blind" procedure involving at least two reviewers. The EMJ publishes six issues a year. Most articles are full length research papers but other types of submissions are welcome (reviews, surveys, opinion papers, interviews). Special Issues or groups of three or four papers (Management Focus) are published under the direction of Guest Editors.