Chapter 9
Towards Making a Sustainable Organization

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ABSTRACT

Sustainable development refers to an economic, environmental, and social development aspect that meets the demands of the contemporary context and does not prevent future generations from fulfilling their requirements. In this perspective, businesses play an imperative role. However, studies reveal that the progress towards sustainable development has been slow, indicating the need for more concrete guidance that would allow businesses to act strategically and successfully in a sustainable way. There are three distinct, but complementary, dimensions of strategic management as viewed from the perspective of sustainability in order to encourage the integration of sustainability issues into corporate activities and strategies. This chapter looks through various aspects of sustainability towards making a sustainable organization through a vertical literature review. This theoretical discussion contributes to existing research to find relationships between strategic management and sustainable development and tries to provide a schema for further empirical research.

INTRODUCTION

Organization can be defined by an organized group of people or a community with a particular purpose, such as a business or government department (Google definition), while sustainability can be termed as the ability to be maintained at a certain rate or level. It is a form of aspect to avoid the depletion of natural resources in order to maintain an ecological balance (Google definition). Along these perspectives,

a sustainable organization can be seen as an organized group of people that aims to advance sustainability and/or include those actions of organizing something sustainably. Unlike many business organizations, sustainable organizations are not limited to implementing sustainability strategies which provide them with economic and cultural benefits attained through environmental responsibility, but also extended towards the overall social development. For sustainable organizations, sustainability can also be an end in itself without supplementary justifications (Wikipedia definition).

In terms of theory, sustainable development refers to an economic, environmental and social development aspect that meets the demands of the contemporary context and does not prevent future generations from fulfilling their necessary requirements. In this perspective, businesses play an imperative function. However, researches reveal that the progress towards sustainable development has been relatively slow, indicating the need for more concrete guidance that would allow businesses to act strategically and successfully in a more sustainable way. There are three distinct, but complementary, dimensions of strategic management as viewed from the perspective of sustainability in order to encourage the integration of sustainability issues into corporate activities and strategies. These three dimensions are: strategy process, strategy content and strategy context. This vertical review tries to contribute to existing research in that it reveals relationships between strategic management and sustainable development and also tries to provide an agenda for supplementary empirical researches (Welford and Jones, 1998; Baumgartner and Rauter, 2017).

As it has been observed in recent research findings, the issue of sustainable development is increasingly present among the concerns of the international academic community in addition to the grass roots communities. However, the depth of the unsustainable practices suggests that insufficient progress has been made to move from an unsustainable lifestyle to sustainable development issues. It has also been observed that by sharing ideas, concepts, tools, experiences learned in different contexts, it is anticipated that one should learn many things that will help the academic communities and companies to develop the skills to make progress towards sustainable development. Particularly, in response to increasing concerns of society about environmental degradation and increasing demands for a transition to a more sustainable society, the business companies are increasingly active in aligning their processes and services with a sustainability agenda. Furthermore, a good management of environmental services has now become the focus of many business strategies tending to the aspiration of 'greening' their infrastructures and product deliveries. Henceforth, the growing demand for "green" products has created major new markets in which visionary entrepreneurs reap the rewards of approaching sustainability. Therefore, by adopting sustainable practices, companies can attain competitive advantage, increase market share and boost shareholder value. In these

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