

Chapter 14

Strategic Organizational Sustainability

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ABSTRACT

This study is aimed to analyze the various features and elements related to strategic organizational sustainability. The analysis departs from the assumption that traditional organizations have to face a lot of challenges posed by the new global economy context confronting contradictory patterns of globalization and de-globalization processes. In order to create the new conditions for the organizations not only to survive but to succeed, a new model based on designing and implementing strategic organizational sustainability, abandoning the narrow focus on economic growth and profits to embrace the social inclusion and equity as well as the environmental sustainability issues, is proposed.

INTRODUCTION

The contemporary society is going through rapid dynamic changes in the new global economy context in which organizations are facing new opportunities and threats to attain sustainable organizational development at their own pace and speed. A more comprehensive presence at work and organization embedded in the society is affected by complex economic and societal factors where besides the organizational policies and job descriptions, the individual workers involved in their interactions have their own backgrounds and personal histories. The global economy has penetrating and changing organizations and their work processes and practices lagging behind the organizational structures, processes, practices, etc., which are requiring organizational solutions. In the new global contextual economic and technological changes, organizations have to develop under specific environmental conditions.

Sustainability has become a relevant issue around the world because organizations and consumers today are more concerned enough on both green ecological and social issues when consuming and using products and services and therefore, they are taking more responsibility for strategic organizational sustainability and environmental management. Organizations may have different approaches to achieve

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-7998-8426-2.ch014

these means and goals due to differential in capabilities, resources, knowledge, expertise, etc. Organizations engage in operational relationships of interactions between individuals, groups organizations and institutions at the workplace making decisions channeled for sustainable organizational and personal development.

Organizational changes in culture, structure and individual behaviors have influence on community development. The organizational structure states the responsibilities of all the workers and manage a communication and consultation system to facilitate the knowledge exchange, organizational changes and progress, cooperation and collective bargaining, ensures the implementation of employment policies, agreements agreed upon procedures, as well as the settlement of disputes and grievances. Traditional organizational structures are struggling with new internal, external and environmental demands.

Organizational sustainability is affected by global and local sustainability challenges, concerns and issues which need to be assessed and analyzed for designing policies, strategies and practices that may have broader economic, social and environmental impact.

The study begins with the analysis of the notions of sustainability and organizations to continue linking both in the conceptualization of organizational sustainability and its components: Economic growth and efficiency, social justice, equity and inclusion, and environmental sustainability. Finally, this study relates all the above components explained and analyzed in the topic of strategic organizational development before elaborating the final conclusions.

SUSTAINABILITY

Around the world, more organizations are taking responsibility for sustainability and environmental management (Rondinelli and Berry, 2000). Sustainability has become a relevant issue because consumers today are concerned enough on both green ecological and social issues when consuming and using products and services.

Sustainability originally was defined as “Meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” (Commission on Environment and Development 1987). (Brundtland Report to the United Nations, 1987). Sustainability is a critical issue for the organizations concerned with meeting the current needs of society without compromising the ability to meet the needs of future generations. Sustainability in essence is concerned with meeting the needs of people today without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (World Business Council for Sustainable Development 2005).

Sustainability is an ecological concept and environmental development concerned with environmental stewardship, economic growth and social justice, which are essential factors to characterize the sustainable organizational development. Sustainable organizational development is a concept that leads to promote growth and development (Sev, 2009). Organizational development has some basic constituents such as recognition and identification in an organizational diagnosis of the current situation, issues and problems to be solved and improved. A planned organizational intervention is conducted through actions, corrective efforts and follow up of sustainable maintenance by updating the measures on results as a continuous feedback aimed to accomplish sustainable organizational development.

The framework that lead towards the environmental sustainability (Hill & Bowen 1997) revolves around the organizational development management of life cycle synergies, involving workers in commitment development and decision-making process. Environmental sustainability is feasible with the

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