Journal of Emerging Trends in Economics and Management Sciences (JETEMS) 7(4):266-275
 (ISSN: 2141-7024)
jetems.scholarlinkresearch.com

SMEs' Adaptability in the Increasingly Discontinuous Business Environment

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Abstract
Enhanced adaptive capabilities edify a firm's dynamic capabilities to respond to the emerging changes and perform more sustainably in the increasingly discontinuous business environment. While using an exploratory qualitative research method, this research evaluates the adaptive practices and models that SMEs use to analyse trends and sense the need for change by modifying their adaptive capabilities to respond to the emerging opportunities or threats. The motive of the study was not only to identify the major underlying paradoxes and uncertainties of the SMEs' adaptive capabilities, but also to suggest the adaptive capability improvement model that the SMEs can adopt. The analysis entailed the evaluations of the opinions of twenty managers drawn from ten businesses in the manufacturing and the retail sectors. Although it was found that most of the businesses accomplish relevant analysis and modifications of their internal capabilities to edify their adaptive and dynamic capabilities, findings revealed lack of evidence of the attempt to match strategy to the prevailing trends by using any or a combination of the four strategic options that include; classical, adaptive, shaping, visionary and multi model approach. Instead, due to the cost of adaptability and management of constant change and transformation, most of the SMEs tend to just conflate predictability with malleability in order to assess whether the prevailing environment is shape-able and unpredictable. Triangulation with theories indicated such approach to cause a mismatch between strategy and the prevailing environmental trends by limiting the business world to only two strategic options; predictable and immutable or unpredictable and mutable. To deal with such shortfalls, this research enriches the existing theories on SMEs' adaptability by suggesting a hybrid model that the manufacturing businesses can use in the initiatives of organising for adaptability to operate more sustainably. Considering that SMEs' sustainability is a challenge that most governments still grapple with, this research is significant and impactful on the basis that it highlights how the reading of the unfolding market and industry trends and response by modifying and reconfiguring their capabilities are critical for SMEs' adaptability and sustainability.

Keywords: discontinuous business environment; organising for adaptability; sustainability

INTRODUCTION

Today's discontinuous business environment represents an era of risk and instability characterised by constant unpredictable changes with complex implications for businesses (Darroch, 2010). As globalisation precipitates new threats and technological advancement and innovation enable every firm to leverage their competencies and attain equal prowess with each other, undertaking a static approach through continuous reliance on the existing competencies is no longer the key of a business' sustainability (Girneata, 2014). Instead, an enterprise's adaptability and the ability to adjust and effectively respond to new changes are increasingly critical for a firm's sustainability (Reeves and Deimler, 2011).However, as most of the firms build agile and flexible business culture to improve their adaptability, recent empirical facts indicate adaptive capabilities' improvement is a challenge that most of the manufacturing enterprises still grapple with (Naidoo and Urban, 2010; Olawale and Garwe, 2010; Scheers, 2011; Small Enterprise Development Agency, 2014).

Considering the enormous funds that could have been invested on the existing internal capabilities, it is often just not easy for the manufacturing enterprises to change and adapt using the required relevant strategies that are also often still quite costly (Naidoo and Urban, 2010; Olawale and Garwe, 2010; Scheers, 2011; Small Enterprise Development Agency,2014).The deterring hefty costs of adaptability are also often exacerbated by the unsupportive rigid business cultures. Basing on Reeves and Deimler's (2011) model on adaptability, this research evaluates the practices and models that businesses use to analyse trends and sense the need for change by modifying their adaptive capabilities to respond to the emerging opportunities or threats and turbulence. Through such analysis, the study aims to not only identify the major shortfalls, but also suggest the adaptive capability improvement model that the businesses can adopt. Considering that SMEs' sustainability is a challenge that most governments still grapple with, this research is significant and impactful on the basis that it highlights the enhance of reading the unfolding market and industry trends and responding by modifying and reconfiguring their capabilities as key to SMEs' adaptability and sustainability. Such approach differ from the approach undertaken in most of the previous debates in which the challenge of SMEs' sustainability in South Africa were often limited to certain broad concepts such as lack of skills and financial resources.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Adaptability connotes the extent to which the enterprise is able to effectively analyse the unfolding trends, sense and undertake the necessary innovations and improvements of its products, services, business structures, management style, business processes, models and strategies to adapt and excel in the midst of the emerging new changes (Banterle, Carraresi and Cavaliere, 2011; Reeves, Love and Trillmanns, 2015). Adaptive capability lays the foundation for firms to improve their dynamic capabilities (Stefano, Peteraf and Verona, 2010; Teece, 2007). To edify adaptability to the emerging changes, firms must demonstrate prowess at four main capabilities; read, sense and act on signals, experiment, manage an enterprise's multi-complex structure and mobilise the relevant resources (Reeves and Deimler, 2011:5).The ability of firms to read, sense and act on signals is enhanced by the use of a more advanced and structured information gathering analysis system.

In this process, the focus is often directed towards identifying the symptoms of the need for immediate and quick change (Reeves and Deimler, 2011:5). Strategic and operational interventions must not only be real time, but also aimed at bypassing the usually slow rational decision making processes and hierarchies (Reeves and Deimler, 2011:5). As much as such a process can enable a business stay ahead of the identified changes, the success of the operational and strategic interventions to be undertaken often depends on resource availability and the executives' willingness to provide appropriate conditions and environment for experimentation(Stefano et al. 2010; Teece, 2007). An integrated approach that permits faster idea generation, conceptualisation, test marketing and replication of the innovation edifies the enterprise's faster response to the newly identified emerging threats and changes (Easterby-Smith, Lylesand Peteraf, 2009).Conditions and environments that permit experiment are not only latent in the development of a learning environment and trial and error without blame, but also significant use of technologies to integrate friendly online consumers in the testing and providing valuable feedbacks that can subsequently be used in the modifications and the development of the new concepts (Easterby-Smith et al. 2009).

Intense innovations and successful introduction of new innovations to enable adaptability are also edified by the executives' ability to manage the associated resulting complex multiple structures of the enterprise (Cheng, Chen, and Huang, 2014;Hudakova and Misun, 2014). Using innovations and improvement of the existing products, services and business processes to enhance adaptability signify that a firm may get involved with multiple partners in the development, testing and marketing (Cheng et al. 2014;Hudakovaand Misun, 2014). It also entails engagement in multiple outsourcing contracts, offshore investments, value nets, value ecosystems and peer production to sustain a dynamic business system that induces adaptability with relative ease (Renaud and Bot, 2012; Robertson and Sribar, 2004).

Effective management of an enterprise's multi-complex structure is accompanied by the mobilisation of the relevant resources and the creation of an environment that facilitates knowledge sharing and flows, diversity, autonomy, risking, collaboration and flexibility (Banterle et al. 2011; Reeves et al. 2015).This spawns the improvement of a business' survival in the continuously discontinuous modern business environment. To survive in such business environment, the executives are expected to act fast and without much warning, but with the requisite competencies to make the appropriate judgment and select the appropriate strategic approach(Dalvi, 2014; Reeves and Deimler, 2011:5). To adopt the appropriate strategic style, the focus of the analysis of the changes of the market and industry trends is often on two sets of factors; predictability and malleability (Dalvi, 2014; Reeves and Deimler, 2011:5). Predictability involves the assessment of how confidently can the executives forecast and ascertain demand, corporate performance, competitive dynamics and market expectations. Malleability facilitates the evaluation of the extent to which such factors can or cannot easily be manipulated by rivals to their advantages (Dalvi, 2014; Reeves and Deimler, 2011:5).

For the adopted strategic style to match the prevailing environment, a matrix is used to plot these two factors and select any of the four strategic styles that include; classical, adaptive, shaping and visionary(Banterle et al. 2011; Reeves et al. 2015). Such approach contradicts the conventional approach in which most of the executives often just not only conflate predictability with malleability, but also strongly interpret that any environment that cannot be shaped is unpredictable (Banterle et al. 2011; Reeves et al. 2015). In such approach, the executives also construe that the business world is either predictable and immutable or unpredictable and mutable (Banterle et al. 2011; Reeves et al. 2015). Since there are certainly more than two strategic possibilities, limiting the business world to only two strategic options can affect the extent to which a firm's strategy is able to match the type of changes occurring in the external business environment (Banterle et al. 2011; Reeves et al. 2015).

While elucidating on the four strategic options, Reeves et al. (2015) explain that classical strategies often applies in relatively predictable environments, but in which it is not reasonably easy for firms to easily adjust and change. It entails the application of strategic analysis frameworks such as SWOT and PESTEL analysis and blue-ocean analysis to identify the prevailing opportunities and position and fortify their positions to gain from such opportunities (Banterle et al. 2011; Govindarajan, 2015; Porter, 1986; Reeves et al. 2015). The adaptive strategic approach applies in the constantly fast changing and competitive industries in which firms need to constantly sense and respond by modifying their capabilities to adapt to such changes (Dalvi, 2014; Reeves and Deimler, 2011:5). Although just like adaptive approach to strategy, shaping also applies in the constantly fast changing industry, shaping requires firms to only adjust and adapt to the competitive trends, but also to invest in new innovations that completely change the nature of the game and competition (Dalvi, 2014; Reeves and Deimler, 2011:5). To enhance the selection of the appropriate strategic style, firms need to avoid traps by applying a set of different strategies in different circumstances to operation in different modes(Dalvi, 2014; Reeves and Deimler, 2011:5).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In other words, it is interpreted in the theoretical framework in Figure 1 that most theories echo Reeves and Deimler's (2011) Model on Adaptability that firms are able to improve their adaptive capabilities and perform more sustainably in the increasingly discontinuous markets by constantly analysing its external business environment(Stefano et al. 2010; Teece, 2007). It can be accomplished by using a combination of the techniques encompassing forecasting, SWOT and PESTEL Analysis, Porter's five forces (rivalry, substitutes, new entrants, supplier and buyers' bargaining power), Porter's four corners (motives, assumptions, strategy and capabilities) and blue ocean analysis (Banterle et al. 2011; Govindarajan, 2015; Porter, 1986; Reeves et al. 2015).Such analysis enables the executives to assess the degree of industry predictability (how confidently can the executives forecast and ascertain demand, corporate performance, competitive dynamics and market expectations) and malleability (the extent to which such factors can or cannot easily be manipulated by rivals to their advantages) (Dalvi, 2014; Reeves and Deimler, 2011:5).

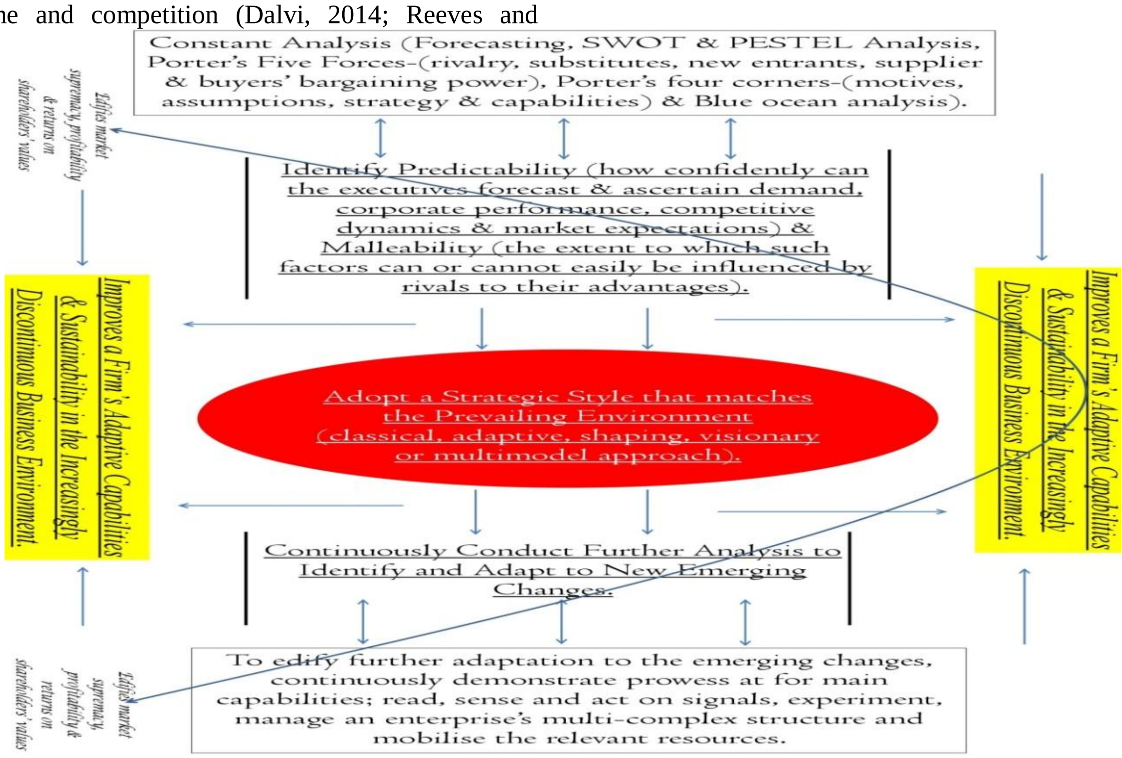

Figure 1: Theoretical Framework: Organising For Adaptability In The Contemporary Discontinuous Business Environment.

Source: As Derived From The Linkage And Integration Of Reeves And Deimler's (2011) Model On Adaptability As The New Competitive Advantage With Reeves, Love And Trillmanns' (2015) Adaptability Model For Less Stable And Unpredictable Business Environment.

Depending on the degree of industry predictability and malleability, the executives can therefore adopt any or a combination of the five strategic styles (classical, adaptive, shaping, visionary and multimodel approach) that matches the prevailing environment. However, the creation of such a strategic fit may not necessarily influence the sustainability of an enterprise, as new emerging trends and threats can easily cause uncertainties, misfits and disequilibrium (Dalvi, 2014; Reeves and Deimler, 2011:5). The avoidance of the emergence of such a circumstance implies that it is critical to continuously conduct further analysis to identify and adapt to new emerging changes.

To accomplish this and ensure adaptation to the emerging changes, it is critical that the executives demonstrate prowess at for main capabilities that include; reading, sensing and acting on signals, experimenting, managing an enterprise's multi-complex structure and mobilising the relevant resources (Dalvi, 2014; Reeves and Deimler, 2011:5). Despite the strongly emphasised positive business implications of adaptability, trends in South Africa indicates that most of the businesses still struggle with the question of the suitable model that businesses can adopt to improve their adaptability and responsiveness to the constant changes in the increasingly discontinuous South African business environment (Naidoo and Urban, 2010; Nenehand Van Zyl, 2014; Olawale and Garwe, 2010; Scheers, 2011; Small Enterprise Development Agency,2014).

Statement of the Problem

Lack of research on SMEs' adaptability has limited the postulation of an array of adaptability models that businesses can use to shape their practices, approach and adaptive capabilities to effectively respond to the constant changes in the increasingly discontinuous business environment.

Purpose of the Research

The main purpose of this research is to assess the SMEs' adaptability practices and models used for analysing trends and sensing the need for change, so as to identify the major shortfalls and the adaptive capability improvement model that can be suggested for improving SMEs' adaptability.

METHODOLOGY

While using an exploratory qualitative research method(Morse, 2010:483), this research assesses the practices and models that businesses use to analyse trends and sense the need for change by modifying their adaptive capabilities to respond to the emerging opportunities or threats and turbulence. The analysis entailed the exploratory evaluations of the opinions and views of twenty managers drawn from ten businesses in the manufacturing and retail sectors. The participants were judgmentally sampled using criteria that emphasised that (Clark, 2010:428); the business had to be a small and medium business employing about 200 people, the business must have been operating in highly competitive and fasting changing industries, and must have attempted to make significant modifications to improve its adaptive capabilities, the participant to be interviewed must have been a manager or supervisor in the marketing or operation department. This led to the sampling of the businesses involved in the manufacturing of electronic products, construction materials, industrial packing materials, the retail enterprises and businesses involved in electronic commerce.

During the interviews, the opinions and views of the participants were solicited on the techniques and methods that they use in the analysis of trends and sensing the need for change by modifying their adaptive capabilities to respond to the emerging opportunities or threats and turbulence. This was followed by the assessment of the kinds of changes that they have often identified and how they responded by modifying the different areas of their operations. The participants were not only requested to name and explain how they have often modified such areas, but also the challenges and if they apply any particular models. The obtained interview findings were thematically analysed and triangulated with the theoretical framework in Figure 1 to reach logical conclusion on the practices and models that businesses use to analyse trends and sense the need for change by modifying their adaptive capabilities (see Figure 2)(Clark, 2010:428). After the major challenges were identified, the key themes from the interview findings illustrated in Figure 2 were further triangulated with the theoretical views in Figure 2 in order to determine the hybrid model that can be suggested. The details of the findings are as presented and discussed in the next sections.

FINDINGS

As it is illustrated in Figure 2, the results of the thematic content analysis of the interview findings are presented and discussed according to two subsections:

- Methodologies: Adaptability in the Discontinuous modern South African Business Environment
- Limitations: Adaptability in the Discontinuous modern South African Business Environment

The details are as.

Methodologies: Adaptability in the Discontinuous Modern South African Business Environment

In a bid to improve their adaptability and perform more sustainably in the contemporary discontinuous business environment, findings revealed most of the businesses to engage in the analysis of the prevailing trends vis-à-vis the effectiveness of the internal capabilities to respond to the identified or predicted threats. Such analysis was found to be followed by the identification of the areas of weaknesses, undertaking the necessary strategic interventions, and measuring the positive business effects of the undertaken strategic interventions.

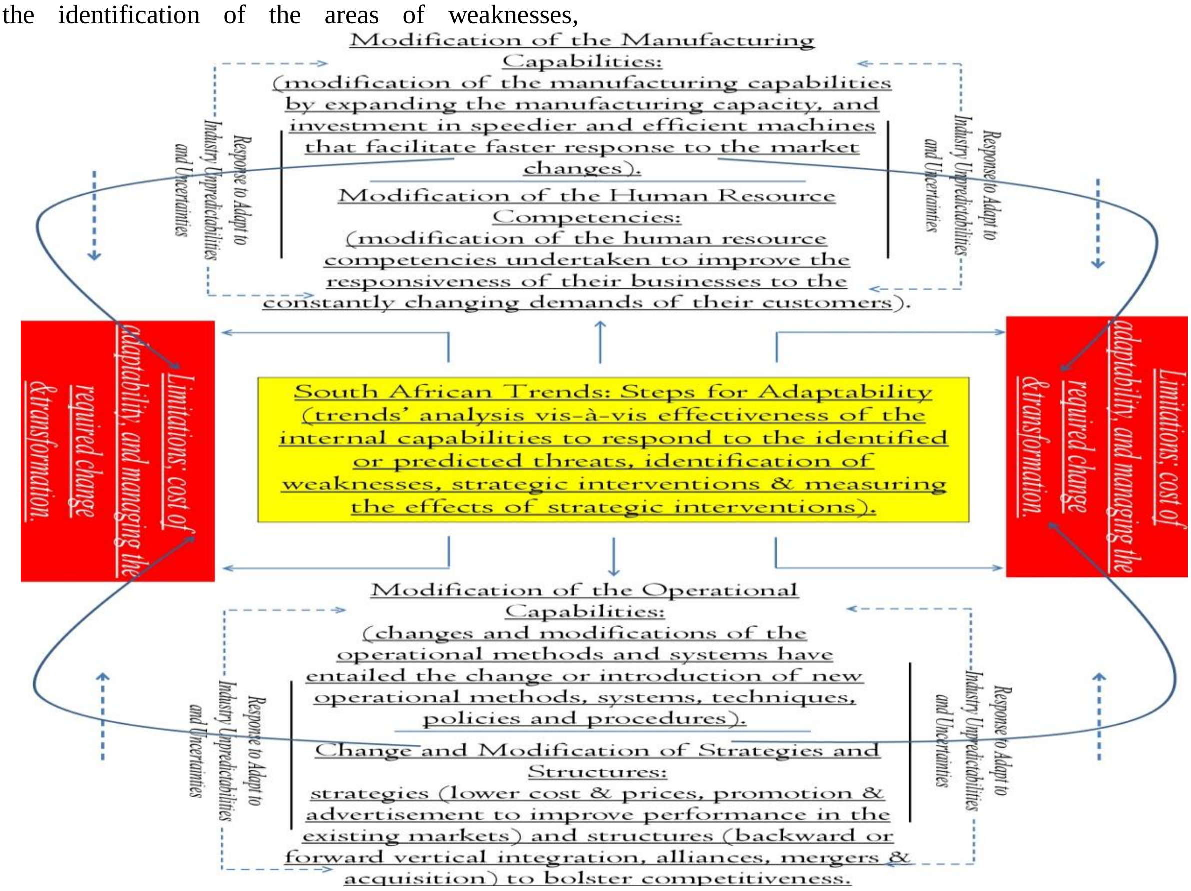

Figure 2: South African Trends: Organising For Adaptability In The Contemporary Discontinuous Business Environment.
Source: As Derived From The Hematic Content Analysis Of The Interview Findings On The South African Trends On Organising For Adaptability In The Contemporary Discontinuous Business Environment.

In event of unpredictabilities and uncertainties, it is illustrated in Figure 2 that some of the techniques that businesses use for improving their adaptive capabilities have often entailed; modifications of the human resource competencies, manufacturing capabilities, research, innovation and improvement of the offered customer values, changes of operational methods, modification of strategies, structures (vertical backward and forward integration, mergers and acquisitions).

The details of these techniques are evaluated as follows.

Modification of Human Resource Competencies

The modification and improvement of the human resource competencies was reiterated to be undertaken by most of the executives to improve the responsiveness of their businesses to the constantly changing demands of their consumers. Especially in the tourism and hospitality industry as well as in the fast food industry and the manufacturing sector, findings imply that the increasingly competitive South African business environment has lured most of the executives to reconsider and re-evaluate the competencies and capabilities of their staffs. In the tourism and hospitality and the fast food industry, it was noted that although the quality of the core products offered was important, increasingly the competitors are shifting focus and emphasis on the quality of services that accompany the provision of such services. In effect, as the executives strive to response by improving the skills and competencies of their front desk staffs, they have also been keen at introducing alternative delivery modes.

In the manufacturing sector, a cross-sectional analysis indicated that as rivals improve on the quality of their products to thereby bolster their competitiveness on the basis of quality differentiation, the improvement of the skills and competencies of the staffs in the mainly the engineering departments was also found to be critical for improving the level of creativity and innovation. This influences the improvement of product quality and improved level of differentiation. The analysis of the findings suggested that in as far as the improvement of human resource competencies and capabilities are concerned, the executives seem to be engaged in sort of a game whereby if a rival exhibits certain improvements, investigations are conducted to identify the sources of such advantages so as to identify the modifications that can be undertaken to ensure that the firm performs better than its rivals. Such initiatives do not only involve the modifications of the human resource capabilities and competencies, but also the modification and improvement of the manufacturing capabilities.

Manufacturing Capabilities

As competition in the manufacturing sector intensifies, findings indicated that the executives tend to engage in a number of strategic analysis and improvement initiatives to improve their manufacturing capabilities. An attempt to create a thematic framework from the findings on the improvement of manufacturing capabilities revealed that the process for conducting relevant analysis and modifying the manufacturing capabilities tend to flow along four main steps; analysis of the prevailing trends vis-à-vis the effectiveness of the internal capabilities to respond to the identified or predicted threats, identification of the areas of weaknesses, undertaking the necessary strategic interventions, and measuring the positive business effects of the undertaken strategic interventions. The views of the manufacturers that operate in more competitive and unpredictable industries indicated that the sources of threats often emerge from the improvement of the rivals' manufacturing capacity, better quality and speedier machines that facilitate faster response to the demands of the distributors and retailers. In a bid to improve the manufacturing capabilities and generate the requisite business values, most executives often consider investing in the purchase better and faster new machineries. If the issue of capacity due to lack of adequate machineries is not a challenge, the executives often conduct relevant analysis on the functionality and the maintenance of the machineries. The motives of such evaluations are usually to identify whether machine redundancies is caused by poor maintenance, of which the maintenance approach must be reviewed or just obsolence that must be fixed to turn around the performance of the plant. Although in certain cases, the manufacturing capacity is not a challenge; its capabilities can still be undermined by the glitches that affect the smooth flow of activities along the value chains. To identify and eliminate such glitches, relevant analysis is conducted along the value chains to identify the strategic interventions that can be undertaken to improve the inflow of inputs from the suppliers into the manufacturing plant and the outflow of finished goods to the distributors, wholesalers, retailers and the final consumers. Such strategic interventions were reiterated in the findings to often be accompanied by changes and modifications of the operational methods to improve the enterprise's adaptability and dynamic capabilities.

Modification of Operational Methods

Some of the changes and modifications of the operational methods and approach have entailed the change or introduction of new operational methods, techniques, policies and procedures. This is attributable to the fact that some of the operational approach and methods often turn to be not only the major inhibitors of the quality of core products, but also the responsiveness of the business to customer needs. In these changes and modifications of the operational methods, most of the participants from the retail sector revealed that the impact of technological evolution has often led to the introduction of new approaches and new modes for competition. The emergence of e-retail and electronic commerce that introduced new competitors and modes of competition in the retail sector was identified as one of the effects and threats of the recent technological advancement. To counter this threat, it was evident from the findings that not only retailers, but also the other businesses that were previously predominantly brick-and-mortar have also been going online. In other words, most of the retailers are now using multi channels comprising of the traditional brick-and mortar and online retail to enhance effective response to the needs of the increasing online consumers and their competitiveness. In addition to the change and modification of the operational methods and techniques, the analysis of the findings also revealed evidence of the change and modification of strategies and structures.

Change and Modification of Strategies and Structures

It also emerged from the analysis of the findings that as new competitors emerge with better prices or the existing competitors undertake the initiatives to modify and reduce the cost structure and lower prices, most of the executives have also often engaged in the modification of their strategies to bolster their overall competitiveness. Some of the strategic modifications have entailed the application of new strategies that lower cost and prices or increment of the promotion and advertisement expenditures to improve their performance in the existing markets. It also emerged from the analysis of the interview findings that as strategies are being modified; the other initiatives have often entailed structural modifications. In these structural modifications, findings revealed that certain firms have undertaken the initiatives to expand to the markets that were previously ignored, in conjunction with backward or forward vertical integration, or even mergers and acquisition as part of the initiatives to enhance their performance and minimise competition.

Limitations: Adaptability in the Discontinuous Contemporary South African Business Environment

Findings imply that the major limitations of organising for adaptability in the contemporary discontinuous business environment are often related to cost of adaptability, and managing the required change and transformation. The details are examined as follows.

Costs of Adaptability

Some of the participants reiterated that limited financial resource for investment in the relevant research and innovation is often a challenge. Constant analysis and modification of the dynamic capabilities was noted to be more expensive in terms of the need for constantly changing and even phasing off some of the equipments and processes that could be adding value. In that instance, most of the executives were found to only consider modifying their capabilities only if the existing equipments, processes and other resources are found to be incapable of enhancing the adaptive capabilities of the enterprise. Limited financial resources affect investment in research and development. Investment in research and innovation that improves the production of new products or the modifications of the existing products, operational processes and methods often requires enormous amount of financial resources for hiring of the required researchers, and conceptualisation and testing of the new innovations. Unfortunately, most of the firms often only have funds for once in a while innovation and introduction of new products or for modifications of the existing products. Although some of the industries are noted to be steady, findings indicated such approach to limit the ability of certain firms to improve their dynamic capabilities and influence their adaptive capabilities. Besides the challenge of limited financial resources, the other limitation was also noted to be linked to difficulties of managing change and transformation from the old to the new system.

Managing Change and Transformation

Findings imply that although once in a while change and transformation is often easier for certain firms to adopt, in circumstances where frequent changes and transformations were required, most of the firms were found to lack the flexibility and agility to change and transform as soon as possible. Modifying structures and operational processes and methods were found to be easier. However, changing the required behaviours and practices to support such structural and operational challenges is often not easy. In the event where frequent changes and transformations are undertaken, some of the participants stated that the implementation of such changes has often resulted into the unintended consequences such as the defection of the valuable employees who cannot easily cope. Although the behavioural changes and the changes of the operational processes and methods can be successfully undertaken, it is also often still difficult to convince and lure customers to purchase the new innovations. In other words, with a majority of the customers used to a particular brand, the introduction of new brands in the name of attempting to improve adaptive capabilities of an enterprise has often not been easy. The implications are latent in the fact that if the innovations are unable to perfectly meet the needs of the consumers, it can affect a firm's market performance. In effect, most of the executives are often hesitant to try new innovations, unless they are sure that either the existing brands do not appeal to the consumers anymore or that the new innovations will exceed the expectations of the consumers.

DISCUSSION

Improvement of a firm's adaptive capabilities is certainly critical for effective performance of the businesses that adhere to do so in the increasingly discontinuous contemporary business environment (Dalvi, 2014; Reeves and Deimler, 2011:5). Enhanced adaptive capabilities edify the improvement of an enterprise's dynamic capabilities. It is during the process of improving a firm's dynamic capabilities that the executives are able to modify their operational methods, technology and human resource competencies to perform more sustainably against all threats and turbulence in the increasingly discontinuous business environment(Day, 2011; Govindarajan, 2015; Tariq and Aslam, 2011). Such a view was echoed in the interview findings in which it was noted that some of the techniques that businesses use for improving their adaptive capabilities include; modifications of human resource competencies, manufacturing capabilities, research, innovation and improvement of the offered customer values, changes of operational methods, modification of strategies, structures (vertical backward and forward integration, mergers and acquisitions).

Although such a finding implies that most of South African businesses accomplish relevant analysis and modifications of the capabilities to edify their adaptive and dynamic capabilities, findings revealed lack of evidence of the application of the four strategic options that include classical, adaptive, shaping, visionary and multimodel (Dalvi, 2014; Reeves and Deimler, 2011:5) approach. Instead, a triangulation of the theoretical findings with the interview findings revealed that there is a greater preponderance among businesses to adopt a conventional approach in which most of the executives often just conflate predictability with malleability in order to assess whether the prevailing environment that can be shaped is unpredictable.

Such approach causes a mismatch between the strategy and the prevailing environmental trends in which Reeves et al. (2015) noted that depending on the degree of industry predictability and malleability, it can be avoided using any or a combination of the five strategic styles (classical, adaptive, shaping, visionary and multimodel approach). In other words, Reeves et al. (2015) argue that the approach in which predictability is just conflated with malleability limits the business world to only two strategic options affects the extent to which a firm's strategy is able to match the type of changes occurring in the external business environment. Even for businesses that strive to improve their adaptive capabilities, findings revealed that most firms still face the challenges linked to the cost of adaptability, and managing the required change and transformation.

MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

It is argued in Figure 3 that considering the findings of this research, it is critical that in a bid to improve their adaptive capabilities, the executives must commence the process by analysing the prevailing and the likely emerging trends in the external environment using forecasting, SWOT and PESTEL analysis, Porter's five forces (rivalry, substitutes, new entrants, supplier and buyers' bargaining power) and Porter's four corners (motives, assumptions, strategy and capabilities).

Figure 3: A Model For Improving The Initiatives Of Organising For Adaptability To Operate More Sustainably In The Contemporary Discontinuous Business Environment.
Source: As Derived From The Triangulation Of The Theoretical Framework In Figure 1 (Reeves & Deimler, 2011; Reeves Et Al. 2015) With The Key Interview Themes And Findings In Figure 2.

As such analysis is being undertaken, it is important for the businesses not only to identify or predict the likely changes, but also to sense the need to change and adapt. Depending on the degree of industry predictabilities and uncertainties, businesses can consider the modification and change of the human resource capabilities, manufacturing capabilities, operational capabilities, strategies and structures to effectively respond and adapt to industry unpredictabilities and uncertainties. The executives can also depending on the degree of industry predictability and malleability, adopt any or a combination of the five strategic styles; classical, adaptive, shaping, visionary and multimodel approach. The completion of the adoption of such adaptive capabilities' enhancement measures must also be accompanied by the measuring of the effects of the adopted strategies on the improvement of adaptive capabilities and sustainability in the modern discontinuous markets.

SUGGESTION FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Enhanced adaptive capabilities edify the improvement of an enterprise's dynamic capabilities. It is during the process of improving a firm's dynamic capabilities that the executives are able to modify their operational methods, technology and human resource competencies to perform more sustainably against all threats and turbulence in the increasingly discontinuous business environment.

Despite the fact that such a finding was confirmed in the interview findings, it was also noted that the improvement of the adaptive capabilities of the businesses in South Africa is not only be constrained by attempt to conflate predictability with malleability, but also limited financial resources, and managing the required change and transformation. The research attempts to deal with such shortfalls by suggesting the framework in Figure that the businesses can use in the initiatives of organising for adaptability to operate more sustainably in the contemporary discontinuous business environment. Considering that SMEs' sustainability is a challenge that most governments still grapple with, this research is significant and impactful on the basis that it highlights the enhance of reading the unfolding market and industry trends and responding by modifying and reconfiguring their capabilities as key to SMEs' adaptability and sustainability. Such approach differ from the approach undertaken in most of the previous debates in which the challenge of SMEs' sustainability in South Africa were often limited to certain broad concepts such as lack of skills and financial resources. However, the limitation of the research is linked to the fact that the study concentrated on the investigation and elucidation of the methodologies and techniques for improving a firm's adaptive capabilities rather than the techniques and tools for measuring the implications of adaptability ona firm's competitiveness, profitability and sustainable growth. In effect, future research can still explore the techniques for measuring the business implications of the model in Figure 3 on a business' sustainability.

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