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## STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT CONSCIOUSNESS

### ABSTRACT

A strategy is a form of approach that includes taking correct and effective steps on the way to a targeted goal. Strategic management is the long-term planning of the road to the goals and the implementation of these plans in the place, time and manner required. Both concepts are complementary but essentially a result of strategic consciousness. The concept of strategic consciousness that constitutes the starting point of strategic management is essential; it can be described as the ability to reach the goals by establishing a connection between the current situation and the future. From this point of view, the concept can be regarded as a special ability unique to individuals and institutions. The whole process between the target, which is desired to be reached from the starting point, is seen as holistic in the basis of strategic consciousness. Another prominent feature of strategic consciousness is that it includes foresight and proactive attitude before problems or crises arise. From this point of view, while solutions are sought in the classical management approach, problems are identified before the problems arise in the strategic management process, which is constructed with strategic consciousness, and it is tried to cope. Thus, the pressures created by possible crises on the organization can be reduced, and further advances can be achieved in the competition with the advantage of strategic consciousness. In today's strict and competitive environment, this way of thinking and skills are a must for businesses and managers. However, strategic awareness needs to spread not only to the management but to the whole organization and to be accepted by the employees with an internal desire.

**Keywords:** Strategy, Strategic Management, Strategic Consciousness, Organization, Business.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Strategic consciousness aims to explore strategies to place approaches an organization that is integrated by comparing opportunities/threats, resources and aims, to a different and a more important place than its past. In general, in literature, strategic consciousness is considered as a special awareness trying to produce solutions for possible problems as well as uncertainties, creating the beginning of strategic management and based on creativity, analysis, forecast and wide-angle consideration. The concept of strategic consciousness is a multidimensional thought system, it can be summarized as an awareness status for both personal and institutional decisions. In order to demonstrate the meaning and position of the concept of strategic consciousness, it is required to consider strategy and strategic management concepts and their differences and relations. In this study, strategic consciousness concept establishing the base for strategy and strategic management has been examined.

### 2. STRATEGY AND STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT

Strategy, in general, is away, a preferred method or a point of view selected to achieve a determined aim (Ergin,1992: 10). A strategy is an action with following each other, completing each other and reintegrative nature. Therefore, it is integration, plans and policies to achieve an integrated aim by determining sub-aims on that way to achieve a selected big aim, realizing these aims and bringing them together (Mintzberg and Quin,1996:3). Hax (1994:9-12), defined strategy by dividing its characteristics in his study with the subject of "defining strategy concept". According to that, a strategy is to ensure the integrity and it is a connector of organizational decisions. It is to make planning and resource allocation to determine long term aims determined in organizational meaning and to realize these aims and to

monitor their realization and usage status. It determines requirements by establishing a mutual relation between the available abilities of an organization and its aims. He demonstrates an appearance by determining advantages and disadvantages with threats and opportunities sourced from the internal and external environment (Hax, 1994:9-12) ... Johnson and Scholes (1993:5-10), explain strategy as a process for compliance with the business branch where an organization carries a business, with close/distance environment, current status and resources/opportunities. Efil (1999: 294) and Dinçer (2013:25) consider the strategy to make internal/external environment analyses to ensure competitive advantage with policies and decisions taken to direct an organization and to make actions and plans to achieve determined aims.

In general, it is possible to name strategy as a prediction, making estimation and process of determining away. Hence, Freedman (2013:9) considers strategy as “an ability to see the whole forest instead of seeing trees one by one in a forest”.

### 3. STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT

Strategic management started to rise in an organization/business management since the 1950s (Nerur, Rasheed and Natarajan, 2008:320). In addition, there is a general consensus in the definition of strategic management, according to Güçlü (2003:70), strategic management is a process of predicting future to determine organizational aims with a mission and to achieve these aims. In that process, it is tried to answer questions such as “what is our work?”, “what should it be?” and “how should it be performed?”. According to Chemengich (2013:3), strategic management is a management understanding and process with a future focus, being formed by long term aims, requiring effective practice, constant monitoring, control and action when it is needed by starting from findings/implications demonstrated with a detailed analysis. Dinçer (2013:35), considered strategic management as a decision-making process; defined strategic management as “Whole decisions and activities for controlling by developing effective strategies, practicing them and assessing their results”. In addition to that, strategy management has been defined as “research, inspection, assessment and selection work required for planning strategies, taking all types of measures in a company for practicing these planned strategies and entering them into force and then activities related with controlling these performed works (Dinçer, 2013:35-36). Strategic management is also to interpreted as skills and process to achieve aims, to create new opportunities in future, to improve the current status, to operate all elements those can contribute these aims according to certain plans (David, 2011:6).

Strategic management has demonstrated an improvement according to the requirements of the era as an understanding and skill form. Developing a long term point of view from short term solutions can be considered as a result of this change and improvement. Strategic management obtained its today form shaped under various factors from the change in performing work, to social expectations, from technical developments to developments in management understanding. Consequently, it is required to compare Strategic Management understandings based on long term predictions and aims with functional management based on short terms plans to understand what is strategic management from a wider angle and to resolve.

**Table 1:** Functional Management and Strategic Management Comparison

	<b>Functional Management</b>	<b>Strategic Management</b>
<b>Focal Point</b>	The solution of daily problems and realizing annual and monthly aims of a person, a group and an organization	The solution of long term living and developing problems, new aims and strategies of an organization
<b>Aims</b>	Profitability based on past experiences	Profitability aiming future and development
<b>Limitations</b>	Current resources and abilities, environment	Current and possible resources and abilities, environment
<b>Results</b>	Efficiency, productivity and balance	Growing, development and consistency

**Table 1:** Functional Management and Strategic Management Comparison (*Cont.*)

<b>Information Source</b>	Transactions and records of organization departments, current conditions	Departments, business and future environmental opportunities
<b>Data Structure</b>	Data that is not much and that belongs to departments	Man, different and from multiple sources
<b>Organization Structure</b>	Bureaucratic, inactive	Innovative and flexible
<b>Leadership</b>	Traditional, task-oriented	Visionary, clear and being affected by changes
<b>Problem's Nature</b>	Urgent, short term, tangible and almost with similar characteristics	Long term, can be postponed, intangible, different from each other
<b>Problem Solving</b>	With reaction nature and based on past experiences	Participatory, by looking for new solutions
<b>Time Horizon, Risk</b>	Short term and low risky	Long term, high risky and vital

**Source:** Dinçer, 2013: 38.

As can be understood from Table 1, strategic management has a wider nature than a planning process. Plans are integral parts for actions used in strategic management practicing stage. In other words, strategic management is a conviction, policy and aiming, plans are tools used for the concretization of them. From a different viewpoint, strategic management is related to a way to achieve aims, plans are building blocks of that way (Ülgen and Mirze, 2014:37-43).

#### 4. STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT CONSCIOUSNESS

Transforming strategic management and planning into an organizational culture has a big importance for today's businesses. Main contributions and benefits of a strategic consciousness phenomenon for organizations; can be sorted as having an organization able to perceive its internal/external environment, being able to interpret experienced developments, being able to predict future opportunities and threats and being able to obtain a competitive success. From this perspective, the strategic management process begins with a strategic consciousness (White, 2004:49).

In literature, it is stated that commercial or public organizations are open systems and it is required to develop strategies for future of these organizations and to act with a strategic management understanding within this scope (Koçel, 2018:281; Ülgen and Mirze, 2014:81) ... Being aware of the importance of strategic management and developing a management type by focusing on this importance, underlie strategic consciousness concept. The scope of strategic consciousness presents a collective nature, it is to determine and interpret subjects with strategic nature (Turkay, Halis, Sarıışık & Calman, 2012:9190). It is possible to gather contents and conceptional focus of strategic consciousness into three groups. The first one is that organizations/institutions become aware of which strategies their competitors develop and how they practice them. The second is the skill to intensify correct strategies by approving them and to look for solutions to develop strategies. The third is to be able to analyze all environmental effects beginning from closer ones and to make observations for threats/opportunities (Ülgen and Mirze, 2014:33).

Mutual point of stated explanations is that strategy consciousness is a concept and skill forming a base for strategic management. According to White (2004:49), since strategic consciousness is a special awareness, it is valid for all areas such as technical, scientific, economic and social areas. Strategic consciousness is to interpret the environment, making predictions, being ready for developments and ensuring compliance (Ülgen and Mirze, 2014). For instance, it can be interpreted as an ability or a skill required for analyzing current and future status of an organization for experienced changes, for demonstrating a visionary perspective from a decision point, for making selections, for performing critical processes. When it is considered from this perspective, strategical consciousness can be described as a combination of strategical thought and personal awareness and it can be asserted that it is similar to leadership phenomenon. Since leadership can be improved with training, etc. natural characteristics are predominating. When elements of strategic consciousness are considered, it is possible to state them as mission, vision, strategic aims, values and strategies. However, the main skill forming strategic consciousness in this point, is formed from combinations of these elements.

Institutions those are managed by persons with strategic consciousness, can appoint their places in future and also, they are the ones who are aware of what kind of problems they can encounter and how to resolve these problems (Naktiyok, 2009:6-7). As demonstrated in Figure 1, the modernist approach suggests that strategic management begins with strategic consciousness.

The beginning point of the strategic management process is strategic consciousness, it is possible to consider the following stages as outputs of that consciousness. For instance, for making effective plans, being successful in competition, opening ways for aims, seeing changes etc. It is required that managers should have a strategic consciousness and they should make that this status is accepted throughout an organization as a mission and vision with an inner willingness.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Strategic consciousness is a status of an approximate and special awareness in designing a way to reach aims those are desired between now and future both in organizational and personal perspective. Since strategic consciousness is the beginning point of strategic management, success to be achieved within this scope is closely connected with mentioned consciousness phenomenon. The most important output of strategic consciousness is that it demonstrates an organizational mission and vision. Hence, strategic consciousness is the first stage in strategy development and strategic management in all organizations whether they are non-profit organizations or not.

It can be said that basic criterion to be able to mention about existence of a strategic consciousness in an organization, is that this status is reflected in throughout an organization. In order to make that decision taken in management level finds a response in the strategic management concept, it is required to ensure organizational compliance and integration with these decisions. For doing this, it is required to spread strategic consciousness phenomenon from top to down. As a result, it is possible to state strategical consciousness phenomenon as a skill to see integrative and strategical thought, to develop solutions for uncertainty and a wide-angle perspective, interpretation experience and knowledge. For this reason, in order to mention the existence of strategic management, it is required to look for the existence of a strategic consciousness.

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