

Ambidextrous strategy: managing uncertainty through and beyond COVID-19 crisis

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The coronavirus crisis could become the deepest since the Second World War. While governments are taking significant steps to tackle the COVID-19, companies are rapidly adapting to the changing needs of their employees, consumers and suppliers, while addressing their financial and operational challenges.

To adapt and thrive, organizations must live high up on the resilience scale [1]. Organizational resilience refers to “the ability of a social system to respond and recover from disasters and includes those inherent conditions that allow the system to absorb impacts and cope with an event, as well as post-event, adaptive processes that facilitate the ability of the social system to re-organize, change, and learn in response to a threat” [2].

To do this, many companies need to rethink and rebuild complex and core services for business processes. While fast change, such as in times of COVID-19 pandemic, is challenging, it still can be managed. Earlier research revealed one such solution - creating ambidextrous organizations. Ambidexterity is organization’s ability”to engage in sufficient exploitation to ensure its current viability and, at the same time, to devote enough energy to exploration to to insure its future viability” [3]. The empirical evidence suggests that organizational ambidexterity is positively associated with firm survival and performance [4, 5]. Moreover, this relationship is enhanced under conditions of market and technological uncertainty [4]. However, there has been limited research on how organizational ambidexterity may promote organizational resilience.

This study extends these arguments and investigates empirically the relationship between organizational ambidexterity and resilience. Results revealed that putting organizational ambidexterity in action in a present turbulent business environment, can contribute to the transformation of organizations in order to respond in due course to market uncertainties and to stay competitive.

References

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