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# **Strategic planning: Between shaping organization action and emerging from organizational action**

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**Abstract:** A wide range of knowledge and concepts on strategic planning has been exploring and analyzing substantially and qualitatively in indicating the contemporary understandings of the nature and the philosophy of strategic planning. These understandings based on the contemporary literatures and experts that investigating and personal reflection on the topic, conceptually and theoretically. Once understandings of the nature and the philosophy of strategic planning are formed, it is hoped that, they can be difficult to shake. They take on a paradigmatic quality, which shape our attitudes, way of thinking and philosophy of life strongly, especially the organizations. Of these, this paper comes to sum up that strategic planning, on the one hand, is mostly shaping the organization actions and on the other hand, in some extent, strategic planning is emerging from organizational actions. This is reasonable, because strategic planning bring with treasuries of characteristics or perspectives, which are designing vision, mission, strategic goals, values and principles for the future of the organizations.

**Keywords:** Strategic Planning, Deliberate and Emerging Strategies, Maumere NTT

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## **1. Introduction**

Strategic planning has been recognized as a powerful tool in order to achieve the organizational strategic goals, vision and mission. Consequently, most organizations, not all, depends on the sizes of the organizations, are embracing strategic planning in their organizations. Such as researches underline that not all organizations are applying strategic planning in the organizations (Glaister & Falshaw, 1999). However, strategic planning has the strong relationship with the organizational performance, management process, and for recourses allocation in the organization (Greenley, 1994; Glaister & Falshaw, 1999). Apart as a dynamic process of allocating recourses in achieving strategic goals in the organization, strategic planning is as a constructive technique for knowledge acquisition, sharing and as an effective learning process. Even though, historically, strategic planning faced some drawbacks in relation to its recognition and inspiration. Strategic planning experienced unpopularity and less influence in the 1970s and regained its power in the 1990s (Mintzberg, 1994a; Glaister & Falshaw, 1999; Lerner, 1999). Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to discuss the debate in terms of strategic planning that shaping organization action and/or emerging from organizational action.

This paper has been structured to cover the main aspects of whether strategic planning shapes the organizational actions and/or emerges from the organizational actions. *First of all*, this paper explores the conceptual framework of strategic planning. This gives the theoretical basis of this paper. *Secondly*, the paper reviews and analyzes the debate in relation to strategic planning that shaping organization actions and/or emerging from organizational actions. *Thirdly*, this paper elaborates the implications of strategic planning for leadership in the organization. *Finally*, this paper ends up with a brief conclusion and recommendation for future researches. This paper concludes that strategic planning, on the one hand, is mostly shaping the organization actions and on the other hand, in some extent, strategic planning is emerging from organizational actions.

## **2. The Conceptual Framework of Strategic Planning**

The discourse on strategic planning has become a hotly debated topic over the last four decades. However, there

have been no consensus between experts and practitioners on the nature and philosophy of strategic planning. This section analyzes the concept of strategic planning from different points of view. This paper also suggests a more practical concept of strategic planning. Thomas Aquinas stated that, 'philosophy is not studied in order to find out what people may have thought but in order to discover what is true', (in Mendonca & Kanungo, 2007, p. 11). Drawing on this idea, this section is the search for true strategic planning in the organization. However, there is not always a common understanding of what strategic planning is in the organizations (Davies & Davies, 2003).

Experts and practitioners attempted to conceptualize strategic planning in different perspectives. Bryson (1995), defined strategic planning as 'a disciplined effort to produce fundamental decisions and actions that shape and guide what an organization (or other entity is), what it does, and why it does,' (p. x). The notion of 'disciplined effort' implies strategic planning as a process and formal. The formal process is to design and engender decisions, policies and actions in the organization. At the same time as Pearce *et al.* (1987) conceptualized formal strategic planning as a process of determining the mission, major objectives, strategies, and policies that govern the acquisition and allocation of resources to achieve organizational goals. Formal, in this point is the formal controls of the leaders in order to achieve organizational vision and mission (Mintzberg, 1985; Zack, 2002). As a process, strategic planning is dynamic (Knutson & Alexander, 1988) and flexible. Strategic planning is a living document subject to re-thinking, review and redesign (Kryder, 1997). Therefore, because strategic planning is a process and its activities are continually changing, the strategic planning must be subject to revision (Knutson & Alexander, 1988) and it should be reviewed periodically in the organizations.

Katsioloudes (1995) described strategic planning as 'the process by which a system maintains its competitiveness within its work environment by determining where the organization is, where it wants to go, and how it wishes to get there', (p. 4). This definition implies a kind of awareness process on the existent and the condition of the organization before, now and in the future. All organizations' stakeholders can aware their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT). Moreover, Strategic planning is the process of setting major organizational objectives and developing comprehensive plans to achieve these objectives of the organizations (Nankervis *et al.*, 2002). Strategic planning makes all the implicit assumptions explicit, considers the major hurdles, make sure that everything is taken into account and that the inconsistencies and incoherencies are uncovered and eliminated (Hafsi & Thomas, 1985; Mintzberg, 1994c).

Although experts and practitioners described strategic planning in different point of views, but most are arguing strategic planning as dynamic and as a process of designing vision, mission, goals and strategies of the organizations,

where these concepts underlying this paper. This paper argued that more than as a set of procedures and concepts, strategic planning is a wide range of planning process for achieving the vision, mission of the organization in a holistic and long-term perspective, by involving all/representation of all units/elements in the organization and representation of other stakeholders, so that all have the sense of ownership and responsibility of the organizations, whether in the condition of success or failures.

### 3. Strategic Planning in the Organization

The problem experienced and faced by most organizations is on what true strategic planning is. However, the true strategic planning plays a central role in the organization. The true strategic planning engages all components in the organization and involving other stakeholders. The nature and philosophy of strategic planning in the organization is to verify the ambitions of the organization to be reached and what directions, through which the organization can achieve these ambitions and dreams (Katsioloudes, 2002). These ambitions and dreams refer to the vision and mission statements, values and principles of the organizations (Schueber, 2005). The reason is once an unambiguous vision of the future and clear principles have been set out, a sequenced set of strategies, priorities and tactics can be established to attain them (Doppelt, 2003). Strategic planning involves deciding on the major directions of the organization, including its structure, strategies, policies and the contributions of its various resources in the organizations (Nankervis *et al.*, 2002).

Strategic planning originates in a central and strategic level of the organization. The key and central to the organizational patterning is the notions of the distinctive competences and cumulative experiences which shape organizational programs and actions. Strategic commitments by organizations and their leaders are necessary to build and sustain the competences such as, the career skills and choices of individuals in the organizations (Leavy & Wilson, 1994). Consequently, strategic planning becomes 'a living document' in the organization (Kryder, 1997). If strategic planning is as 'a living document' in the organization, it is undoubtedly, as a potential asset for the organizations. It can be accessed by all people in the organization and by other stakeholders and becomes an effective tool to facilitate learning process for individuals and the organization (Katsioloudes, 2002).

Strategic planning has been viewed as an anticipation strategy for the future of the program activities of the organization by using preventive measures (Joyce, 1999). Strategic planning helps the organization identifying resources needed to meet the organizational strategic goals and to meet the vision, mission and the context of the organization (Schueber, 2003). Strategic planning in the organization occurs for shaping organizational dispersed

program activities and to improve organizational performance (Samson & Daft, 2003). Moreover, strategic planning empowers staff and other stakeholders to be able to facilitate community empowerment and to achieve organizational vision, mission, and goals (Beal, 2003). Strategic planning stimulates changing and innovation in the organization and make the organization realizing and anticipating the internal and external pressures and in improving the efficiency of the organizational and the community services (Kennie, 2002; Samson & Daft, 2003).

Mintzberg (1994a) viewed strategic planning designed by the top leaders of the organization ignores the realities of planning experienced by those at the operational levels. Consequently, strategic planning is no longer the duty of top management or top leader to manage the entire strategic planning process. The staff and other stakeholders also have the responsibility and an active participation in this entire process (Zack, 2002; Van der Linde, 2001). This is actually, the critique of this paper lies. The reason is that the leaders and leadership are not everything in the organizations. Leaders and leadership are as facilitators for facilitating the process of strategic planning and underpins the process of implementation of this strategic planning. This is also has the impact on emergent strategy, because the limitation of leader and leadership in handling all the process and implementation of strategic planning. Therefore, strategic planning should be formulated within the context of organizational strategies and objectives, and should be responsive to the external and internal changing of the environment of the organization (Walker, 2001; Albrecht, 2001; Nankervis *et al.*, 2002). Therefore, the organization needs a much more holistic, long-term, consistent and coherent approach to strategic planning (Davies & Davies, 2003; Davies, 2003; Bell, 2003).

If strategic planning is recognized as play a central position in the organization, then it can impact the other strategies, such as strategic leadership, strategic thinking, strategic decision, strategic commitments, strategic implementation, strategic goals, strategic learning, and strategic management. Schematically, it can be viewed as follows:

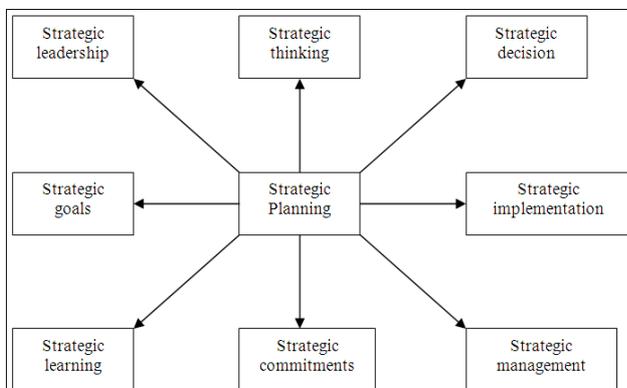


Figure 1. The impacts of strategic planning

## 4. Strategic Planning between Shaping Organization Actions and Emerging from Organizational Actions

The discourse of strategic planning as forming the organizational actions and coming out from organizational actions, emerged from the depth reflection of epistemological and ontological perspectives of strategic planning. Epistemologically, strategic planning is shaping the organizational action, vision, mission and goals and objectives of the organizations (Katsiolouides, 2002; Nankervis *et al.*, 2002; Glaister & Falshaw, 1999; Mintzberg, 1985). Ontologically, strategic planning, in some extent is emerging from the process of organizational actions implementations. Therefore, this section explores strategic planning as shaping and emerging from the organizational actions. In the process of analysis, this paper will refer to deliberate and emergent strategy and approach (Mintzberg, 1985; 1994c; Boisot, 1995; Lerner, 1999; Davies & Davies, 2003).

### 4.1. Deliberate Strategy

Strategic planning has been viewed as a deliberate strategy because it formed a number of program activities and the organizational intentions into a plan and leads to translate this plan into collective actions in the organization (Mintzberg, 1985). Strategic planning is predictable and less controllable (Mintzberg, 1978; 1985). Therefore, strategic planning requires staff to be both proactive and interactive in the organization. Proactive, implies that the staffs respond to changes in the organization. The staff should also be interactive in the sense that to influence and shape internal environment by deploying resources to create change (Fidler, 1996; Bell, 2003) in the organization.

Deliberate strategy underpins the organization to plan in an unstable environment with a broad understanding without the necessity to engage in obsessive detail in the planning process (Davies & Davies, 2003). Boisot (1995) described deliberate strategy as a process of coping with turbulence through a direct, intuitive understanding, emanating from the top of the organization and guiding its efforts or actions. Deliberate strategy is about tackling deep-seated cultural and structure change and fundamental rethinking by building organizational capability and competencies. These competencies and capabilities enhancements are based on increased knowledge and understanding as to how to perform at a higher level as well as what to perform (Davies & Davies, 2003). Therefore, strategic planning involves broad development areas where targets are known and the actions necessary to achieve those targets are also understood (Davies & Davies, 2003).

In this context, deliberative democracy is imperative in the process of strategic planning. The reason is that deliberative democracy accommodates an expanded set of discursive interactions in the process of strategic planning. This is important, not because of the strategic planning

process, but also for sharing experiences, knowledge, values and cultures (Enslin, 2006). Thus, the different point of views in the process of strategic planning becomes the deliberative resources (Young, 2000) and not as hindrances or challenges. Deliberative processes in the process of strategic planning promote just policies and decision making in the organization. For the reason that, “if all significantly affected by problems and their solutions are included in the discussion and decision-making on the basis of equality and non-domination, and if they interact reasonably and where people are accountable to one another, then the results of their discussion is the most wise and just,” (Young, 2000, p. 29).

#### 4.2. Emergent Strategy

Reflecting on the notion of strategic planning as disciplined effort and as a process, strategic planning implies the aspects of dynamic and flexibility. As a discipline, strategic planning becomes a formal practice in the organization. As a process, strategic planning allows the possibility to review and learn from success and failure, and respond to change. In this point, the organization has to respond to the emergent strategy. Davies and Davies (2003) described emergent strategy as ‘learning from doing. Emergent strategy occurs when an organization is presented with a change. In such circumstances a process of learning by doing, or trial and error, can be utilized. This change involves a reactive process. The organization reacts by building on the initial limited or low level of understanding to develop a strategy’, (p. 82).

Emergent strategy arises as an internalization of success and failure over the implementation of the organizational program activities. The successful experiences become a pattern in the organization (Davies & Davies, 2003). Mintzberg (1994a) explored that emergent strategy is a set of actions, or behavior, consistent over time, a realized pattern that was not expressly intended. The reason is that, although organizations can, and should, evaluate their environment, no one can foresee the future. Events occur that challenge our assumptions and contradict our forecasts. Also, bright ideas often come spontaneously, outside of the formal strategic planning process’s framework, and between planning events.

For example, YLPM – Bangwita (a local NGO in Flores, NTT, Indonesia) has the focal program activities or actions on sustainable and integrated agriculture, agro-forestry, training, and the development of economic-based community. These program activities are as an intended or deliberate strategy of the organization. In spite of this, during the course of program implementation processes, YLPM – Bangwita found some critical issues to be addressed in the community, such as gender issues, advocacy, networking, education and research. These issues become the emergent strategies or actions for YLPM – Bangwita and the targeted community. Moreover, these issues become visible in the operational planning levels. As a result, the organization has to respond to these salient

issues, because these are important to serve the needs of the community. Drawing on the mentioned analysis above, this paper suggests the process of emergent strategy in the organization.

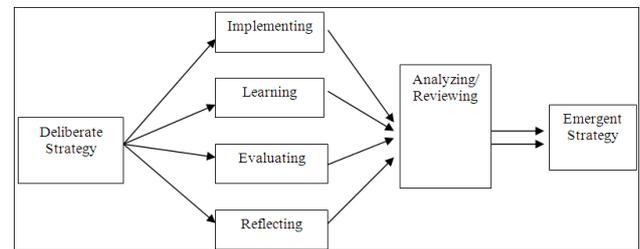


Figure 2. Emergent strategy process in the organization

By response these emergent strategies, the organization shows the flexibility aspect of strategic planning. Strategic planning becomes a living document that subject to rethinking, re-evaluate, review and update as needed (Kryder, 1997). The act of strategic planning provides the discipline and the arena for management to talk periodically about strategy and to reshape existing plans to adjust for new influences and perceptions (Mintzberg, 1994a; Kryder, 1997). The emergent strategy is also as a consequence of the very nature and philosophy of strategy itself. Reasonably, strategy planning is intuitive, irregular, and often unexpected. Strategy planning comes from the vision and mission, and the creative ideas of the organization (Kennie, 2002; Kryder, 1997; Mintzberg, 1994b).

#### 4.3. Deliberate Solution

Integrating the deliberate and the emergent strategies in some ways will help the organization to control its course while encouraging the learning process. The deliberate solution implies bridging the deliberate and emergent strategy in the organization. This paper comes to an agreement with Mintzberg (1985; 1994a) terminology *umbrella strategy*. The umbrella strategy indicates the broad context of deliberate strategy while the details are allowed to emergent strategy within this umbrella (Mintzberg, 1994a; 1985; Hax & Majluf, 1996; Lerner, 1999). The unpredicted and unintended events frequently occur that differ from the organization intended strategies and the organization must respond (Lerner, 1999). Put it in another way, strategic planning is not a superior form of planning because it is proactive, nor is emergent strategy an inferior sort of planning because it is reactive (Davies & Davies, 2003).

Deliberate and emergent strategies are appropriate given the context of the level of understanding and the time frame within which the organization is operating (Davies & Davies, 2003). The different is that deliberate strategy focuses on direction and control – getting desired things done, whereas, emergent strategy opens up the notion of strategic learning. Emergent strategy opens the process of strategy making up to the notion of learning (Mintzberg,

1985). When a deliberate strategy is realized, the result matches the intended course of action. An emergent strategy develops when an organization takes a series of actions that with time turn into a consistent pattern of behavior, and culture, regardless of specific intentions. Deliberate strategy offers the organization with a sense of purposeful direction. Emergent strategy implies that the organization learning from the practices of strategic planning and its implementation (Mintzberg, 1994a; Davies & Davies, 2003).

Mintzberg (1994c) argued that:

“A strategy can be deliberate – consisting of the specific intentions of senior management that have been subsequently realized. But it can also be emergent, meaning that a pattern formed among different actions without conscious intention. Strategies can develop inadvertently; often through a process of learning ...it could be argued that all viable strategies have both deliberate and emergent qualities. The lack of one implies an unwillingness to learn as behaviors unfold, just as the lack of the other implies an unwillingness to think before those behaviors take place”, (p. 25).

## 5. The Implications for Leadership in the Organization

To be successful in strategic planning process, the organization needs strategic leadership and management in supporting strategic decision-making and policy, and creating the culture of the organization, which put strategic planning in place structurally. Joyce (1999) emphasized that “strategic leadership is seen as a key element in effective strategic management. Strategic leadership makes the difference between planning which is barely noticed and planning which shapes and makes the future”, (p. 87). Strategic planning becomes a guideline for leaders in leading the organizational future. Strategic planning is a technique which assists leaders and managers in getting direction when the future getting unpredictable and turbulent (Van der Linde, 2001). Therefore, the emphasis is on holistic policies that focus on integration rather than fragmentation. The organization requires a new form of leadership predicted on openness, collaboration and responsiveness can flourish and genuine accountability for the achievement of vision, mission, and strategic goals (Bell, 2003) of the organizations.

Leaders play an active and a central role in providing guidance, coordinating and supporting the implementation of program activities or actions, employees and organizational units for working at cross purposes. There is a positive relationship between leader's initiation of work structure and performance of creative activities (Keller, 1992). Leadership is a key to managing organizations in period of change and crisis and transforms the organization (Bichard 2000; Carnall, 2003). Leaders must support emerging processes with visionary proposals and a personal

commitment of time and power. The leaders have a pivotal role in strategic planning process, which is to create the context where people can engage in informed debate and discussion in a creative and positive manner and on how to turn strategy into operation (Kennie, 2002) or actions. All in all, strategic planning has the implications for leaders and leadership in the organization in creating culture, structure and context where staff and other stakeholders feel valued, being human and civilized.

## 6. Conclusion

This paper has been outlined the strategic planning settings, conceptual framework of strategic planning, and the position of strategic planning in the organization. The debate of whether strategic planning is forming the organizational actions or coming out from organizational actions has been discussed and analyzed. The implications for leadership in the organization also have been explored. In this point, the role of leadership and staff are imperative, in order to respond the emergent strategy, because it is urgent to the needs of the organization and the community, especially in policy and decision-making process.

This paper also argues that more than as a set of procedures and concepts, strategic planning is a wide range of planning process for achieving the vision, mission and the strategic goals of the organization in a holistic and long-term perspective, by involving all/representation of all units/elements in the organization and representation of other stakeholders so that all have the sense of ownership and responsibility of the organizations. For that reason, strategic planning is very important and useful document in directing the organizational program activities and actions. Strategic planning is not as a static document, on the other hand, as a live document, where it has the possibility to review, re-evaluate and redesign. Strategic planning has the central position in the organization.

Finally, this paper maintains that strategic planning is both deliberately forming the organizational actions and emerging from the organizational actions. However, the deliberate strategy is much more dominant in the organization rather than the emergent strategy.

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