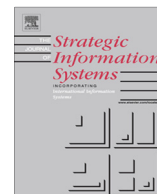




ELSEVIER

Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

Journal of Strategic Information Systems

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/jsis

Open strategy: Literature review, re-analysis of cases and conceptualisation as a practice

Asin Tavakoli ^a, Daniel Schlagwein ^{b,*}, Detlef Schoder ^a

^a University of Cologne, Department of Information Systems and Information Management, Pohligstr. 1, 50969 Cologne, Germany

^b UNSW Australia Business School, School of Information Systems, Technology and Management, Quadrangle 2114, UNSW, Sydney, NSW 2052, Australia

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 14 September 2015

Received in revised form 25 January 2017

Accepted 26 January 2017

Available online xxx

Keywords:

Open strategy

Openness

Strategy as practice

Practice theory

Literature review

Research agenda

ABSTRACT

An increasing number of organisations (e.g., Daimler, IBM and Red Hat) have adopted what has been called “open strategy”: involving large groups of people in strategy making via information technology (IT). Our review of the recently emerged research stream on open strategy reveals inconsistencies in the use of explicit definitions and implicit conceptualisations of open strategy. To support future discourse and research, we develop a theoretically coherent and comprehensive conceptualisation of open strategy as a practice in this paper. This conceptualisation is based on a structured review of existing publications and re-analysis of well-documented open strategy cases. We use the strategy-as-practice lens and the concept of *Idealtypus* as theoretical foundations. The paper proposes a research agenda for open strategy.

© 2017 Elsevier B.V. All rights reserved.

1. Introduction

This paper reviews the emerging literature on “open strategy” and provides conceptual development. Open strategy is an emerging information technology (IT)-enabled strategizing practice in which organisations involve large numbers of internal or external people in strategy making (Whittington et al., 2011). For example, IBM involved no fewer than 150,000 people in its strategy planning via an IT platform (Bjelland and Wood, 2008). The use of open strategy has also been documented at Daimler (Binder and Bertram, 2010), HypoVereinsbank (Matzler et al., 2014a), Premium Cola (Luedicke et al., 2016), Red Hat (Yeane, 2011), Wikimedia Foundation (Dobusch and Kapeller, 2013) and other organisations (Gast and Zanini, 2012). Open strategy promises access to dispersed and creative strategic ideas (Matzler et al., 2014a), better and faster decisions (Yeane, 2011), and increased approval of strategy by employees, customers and partners (Jette et al., 2015). Open strategy is enabled by social IT (e.g., Haefliger et al., 2011) and it is becoming an important strategic use of IT (Harrysson et al., 2016).

Open strategy has been of increasing interest to researchers, with a first generation of research studies on open strategy already published. The high level of current research interest in open strategy is further evident in dedicated panels (Berends et al., 2013), workshops (Friesl et al., 2014), online communities (Seidl et al., 2016), conference tracks (Dobusch et al., 2015) and journal special issues (Whittington et al., 2014).

Open strategy is categorically different from traditional “top-level strategizing” and qualitatively different from “bottom-up strategizing”. Traditional top-level strategizing is mostly secretive (Powley et al., 2004), non-inclusive and closely controlled by the organisation’s “upper echelon” (Hambrick and Mason, 1984), the elite group of senior executives (Andrews, 1988; Montgomery, 2008). Bottom-up strategizing refers to the involvement of middle management (Floyd and

* Corresponding author.

E-mail addresses: tavakoli@wim.uni-koeln.de (A. Tavakoli), schlagwein@unsw.edu.au (D. Schlagwein), schoder@wim.uni-koeln.de (D. Schoder).

Woolridge, 1992) or selected groups of employees from lower organisational levels (Mantere and Vaara, 2008). However, extending beyond bottom-up strategizing, open strategy is unique in its overall transparency (Dobusch and Mueller-Seitz, 2012; Whittington et al., 2011), wide inclusiveness (Santalainen and Baliga, 2015; Stieger et al., 2012) and the central use of social IT to effectively enable mass participation (Amrollahi and Ghapanchi, 2016; Haefliger et al., 2011). Open strategy can be seen as a particular form of IT-enabled crowdsourcing (Malhotra et al., 2016). Hence, open strategy is considered a novel and unique strategizing phenomenon that needs separate study (Whittington et al., 2011).

In our structured review of the emerging open strategy literature, we found interesting and relevant insights on open strategy. However, we also found ambiguities and inconsistencies in how the phenomenon of open strategy is delineated, defined and conceptualised. Even the name of the phenomenon is unclear, described with terms such as: “open strategy” (e.g., Whittington et al., 2011), “co-creating strategy” (e.g., Rapp et al., 2016), “democratic strategy” (Stieger et al., 2012), “collaborative strategic planning” (e.g., Liinamaa et al., 2004) among others. The literature is also inconsistent in regard to which actual phases and routines are “open”: idea generation (e.g., Whittington et al., 2011), decision making (e.g., Pittz and Adler, 2016), strategy communication (e.g., Dobusch and Gegenhuber, 2015) or all of them. Furthermore, open strategy has been described as involving internal people (Stieger et al., 2012), external people (Brauner and Kettner, 2015) or both (Bjelland and Wood, 2008). In short, the literature review reveals that, while there is implicit consensus that “open strategy” is a novel and unique phenomenon worthy of dedicated study, no consensus exists about what “open strategy” precisely is and how it should be theoretically approached.

To increase clarity and move the discourse and research on this interesting phenomenon forward, this paper addresses the following questions: firstly, *how has open strategy been conceptualised in prior literature?* Secondly, in recognizing the value of a practice-theoretical view on open strategy (as we will discuss below): *how can open strategy be understood as a practice?* Thirdly, then: *how do we advance research on open strategy?*

Our answers to these questions are based on a structured literature review (Jones and Gatrell, 2014; Rowe, 2014; Schryen, 2015) in which we analysed claims about, and conceptualisations of, open strategy. The review led to us to formulate a practice-theoretical view on open strategy because we found this view to be particularly informative. We used the strategy-as-practice lens (Golsorkhi et al., 2010; Jarzabkowski et al., 2007; Whittington, 1996) to re-analyse seven salient, well-documented open strategy cases described in the literature. The cases were not necessarily presented in practice-theoretical terms and concepts in the original sources. Based on this practice-theoretical re-analysis and drawing on Max Weber’s concept of *Idealtypus* (Weber, 1904), we then develop an improved conceptualisation and definition of “open strategy” as a practice as the key contribution of the paper. We propose a research agenda based on this conceptualisation.

The paper is organised as follows. In Section 2, we present our literature review method. In Section 3, we present the review findings with a focus on conceptual and definitional issues, identifying entity, process and practice views on open strategy. In Section 4, we present an overview of seven salient and well-documented open strategy cases and re-analyse them using the practice view. Based on this analysis, we develop a practice-based conceptualisation of open strategy. In Section 5, we discuss the implications of the paper and provide a research agenda for open strategy. We conclude with a brief summary.

2. Literature review method

We undertook a structured review of the literature on open strategy to investigate and critically assess how open strategy has been researched and conceptualised to date. Literature reviews are an appropriate method to systematically and critically assess the state of research on a particular phenomenon: they help to inform concept and theory development (Rousseau et al., 2008; Rowe, 2014) and to develop agendas for future research (Boell and Cecez-Kecmanovic, 2014; Schwarz et al., 2007; Webster and Watson, 2002).

We conducted a structured (systematic and iterative) process of searching, reading, selecting and integrating prior literature (Jones and Gatrell, 2014; Rowe, 2014; Schryen, 2015). Due to the novelty of the phenomenon, we reviewed both academic and professional publications. Our decision to include professional publications was due to the limited availability of academic publications to date, to capture views and terminology of professional praxis and to access and include detailed reports of cases not found in academic publications at that level of detail (see also Tate et al., 2015; vom Brocke et al., 2015).¹ Our interest was in the actual doing of open strategy within the reported cases (rather than success or performance measures).

To identify relevant academic sources, we conducted keyword-based searches in several leading academic databases (i.e., ProQuest ABI/INFORM, AIS eLibrary, EBSCOhost, JSTOR, ScienceDirect and Web of Science). To identify relevant professional sources, we searched leading professional online repositories (e.g., Gartner, Management Innovation eXchange [MIX] and McKinsey Quarterly). We used keyword-based searches to avoid an overly narrow focus on particular outlets and to find all (or almost all) available publications (Kitchenham and Charters, 2007). In addition, we used backward and forward searches (Webster and Watson, 2002). That is, we analysed the reference lists of identified relevant publications (backward search) and, using the “cited by” functions of Google Scholar and Web of Science, we searched for newer publications citing

¹ We acknowledge that issues of vested interest could be present in professional publications. We considered the benefits of including such publications (e.g., more detailed accounts of cases) to outweigh the drawbacks.

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/4973066>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/4973066>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)