

**WROCLAW UNIVERSITY OF ECONOMICS FACULTY OF
MANAGEMENT, COMPUTER SCIENCE AND FINANCE**

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**Identification of approaches to strategies in enterprises
in the FMCG food sector. Methodological approach**

Summary of PhD Dissertation

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Introduction

Demand for strategic thinking in an economy with strong competition and high volatility has become a prerequisite for the development of a scientific trend in the area of science about management, i.e. strategic management. The issues of strategic management are wide, complex and characterized by a variety of approaches and research methods. It is a process whose effectiveness depends to a large extent on the accuracy of the answers to the following questions: where is the enterprise now, where would you like to be in the future and what directions of action will help him achieve the set goals?

The economic practice of recent years has been full of spectacular examples of companies' behavior on the market, rapid changes in the field of legal and organizational forms or capital forms, which often ended with extraordinary success, but sometimes also a devastating failure. This raises the question - what really motivates decision makers to make decisions about significant changes regarding future activities of the organization, in other words, to specific strategic choices in the dynamic environment of the 21st century.

One of the reasons for this is the immature character of the strategic management theory. This affects the lack of clarity in the processes of strategic diagnosis, strategic analysis, strategy choices and its implementation. This often makes strategy theory unreliable. Thus, it is often the basis for questioning its theoretical utilitarian character. The author believes that there is currently no dominant, universally recognized school / approach to strategic management, and also one optimal strategy for each enterprise. It is difficult to expect a single, universal approach to the strategy that suits every company. The company's strategy must be shaped individually, assuming at least the scale of the enterprise, the type of business, the company's maturity and economy, in which the company conducts activities, etc. It all influences the choice of a particular strategic school.

That is why it is important to use the strategic management processes when designing from the achievements of modern science, but at the same time not to focus on one solution. The research dissertations proposed by the author are to prove that it is possible to identify approaches to strategies suited to the company, its situation and thus effective development of subsequent stages of strategic analysis. In addition, the author expects to show that approaches to strategies previously only present in the strategic management literature, as theoretical approaches, may also be useful in practice. Already preliminary research carried out by the author gave the opportunity to increase the probability of formulating such a supposition. It seems that many strategists in enterprises are

not aware that when making strategic decisions, they are guided by one of the approaches to the strategy.

While the literature on the subject of strategic management in the area of strategies and management methods in domestic and foreign terms is exceptionally rich, information is clearly lacking in terms of the procedure of choosing an approach to the strategy of a given company or choosing an appropriate tool to implement such a strategy. The author of the project has identified a clear research gap in this context, a gap that has become an inspiration to take action to design a tool to support the strategic management process in enterprises.

Many managers in enterprises are unaware of the practical application of strategically identified and strategically described approaches in the literature. As a result, strategic decision-making in an enterprise is often not consistent with the assumed goal and its implementation. No connections between goals and the company's profile in a given industry can have negative effects. Erroneously formulated goals may cause dispersion and sub-optimization of activities and problems with the organization's adaptation to changes in the environment. Therefore, it is reasonable for the decisions that are relatively important for the company to be supported by the use of a tool that would, in the first stage, diagnose the selected enterprise and be classified into a specific trend of strategy management in strategic management. This would aim to better match the strategic management tools to the company profile. Due to the diagnosis made in this way, the analysis of the enterprise itself would be the basis for making decisions regarding the company's long-term goals.

Purpose

The problem identified in the dissertation is the lack of matching strategic thinking in the companies with the actual operating conditions of the given company and resulting from this, mistakes in strategic management.

The main objective pursued in the dissertation is to develop a method for identifying approaches to strategy in strategic management, in particular in enterprises of the FMCG food industry sector. The goal defined in this way is complemented by complementary objectives:

- cognitive goal - increasing the knowledge of strategic approaches to strategic management, in particular regarding the features of these approaches and methods of their identification,
- methodological goal - indicating the methodical basis of the method for identifying approaches to strategies in strategic management,
- utilitarian purpose - developing a useful instrumentation to support strategic decision making based on the developed method of identifying strategy approaches in strategic management.

The indirect goals of this dissertation are:

- C1: building a systematic review of literature on strategic management and conducting this review in order to identify knowledge about approaches to strategic management strategies,
- C2: identification of the research gap in the method of choosing a strategy approach in strategic management and choosing the right tool to implement such a strategy, along with verification of this method.
- C3: developing a method for identifying strategy approaches in strategic management of enterprises from the FMCG food industry,
- C4: identification of approaches to strategy in strategic management of enterprises from the FMCG food industry using the developed method.
- C5: discussion of the results of identifying approaches to the strategy in strategic management of enterprises from the FMCG food products sector in the literature.

Methodology and approach

Achieving the set goals and verifying the research hypothesis required carrying out:

- review of Polish and foreign literature in order to identify the research gap,
- carry out the main study.

In accordance with the adopted objectives of the dissertation, the following framework of empirical research has been established, the characteristics of which are set out in the following points:

- time range of the study,
- characteristics of the population and the research sample,
- methods of collecting data and information,
- empirical research procedure.

Time range of conducted literature and empirical studies, inclusive with the verification test the tool takes into account:

- critical review of the literature on the subject of strategic management in the area of approaches to the strategy - implemented in the period September 2017 - June 2018,
- main study - started on 1 December 2017 with launch as part of the *webankieta.pl* service and public release of the final version of the online survey questionnaire, and completed in August 2018 (questionnaire survey) and in October 2018 (direct interview).

As part of the doctoral dissertation, the author conducted literature studies and carried out quantitative research (CAWI and direct interview) in the form of:

- critical review of the literature - the author's review of literature management in the field of strategic management was used to identify the state of knowledge on strategic management and the choice of strategy approach in a company's strategic management, i.e. identify the research gap.
- proper research carried out in two stages, using the quantitative method using the CAWI method and the direct interview method based on the questionnaire. It allowed to gather a comprehensive research material that would answer the research questions posed.

The first stage of the main study is a survey using a questionnaire according to the adopted procedure for identification of approaches to strategy in strategic management for enterprises from the FMCG food industry. The initial number of examined enterprises was 784 (research

population). The aim of the study was to reach at least one employee at medium or high management level in each company. The survey was conducted using an online questionnaire (CAWI method - Computer Assisted Web Interview) by means of applications enabling a professional survey aimed at middle and top management members. Taking care of the effectiveness of returning the largest number of surveys from a given company, the address database has been verified using the LinkedIn application. The next stage is a direct interview according to the adopted procedure for identifying strategy approaches in strategic management for a selected enterprise from the FMCG food sector. The survey was directed to employees of the selected enterprise (president / owner, directors, managers, low-level employees). The research used an internet survey, which is one of the relatively newest methods in the field of indirect surveys,.

For the sake of reliable preparation of the tool used in the study - i.e. the online questionnaire - the proper study was preceded by two studies, the aim of which was to verify the research tool. The basic objectives implemented during this stage of the research are the verification of the research instrument.

The structure of the questionnaire was based largely on closed questions (first of all, the scale of positions and position scales - Likert scale were used.) In addition, selected questions were related to the goals and research hypotheses set forth in the present study, so that the statistical analysis, the answers given to them, it allowed them to be verified.

To sum up, after the previous coding and tabulations obtained in the data survey process, a total of 111 questionnaires were submitted to the statistical analysis (ie all received questionnaires - no deficiencies were found). The obtained level of return of the questionnaire questionnaires was 13% of the designed sample structure.

Dissertation structure

The work consists of five chapters. In the first parts of the work, the Author undertakes the construction and verification of a tool for the critical review of the literature. Next, he presents the development of approaches to strategy in strategic management, taking into account in particular its essence, genesis, precursors and selected classification of approaches to the strategy. In the following parts of the work, tools have been built, adapted and verified, which is the method of identifying approaches to strategies in strategic management of enterprises. The dissertation is

completed by presenting the directions of using in theory and practice the methods of identifying approaches to strategies in strategic management.

In connection with the above, the structure of the work is as follows.

The first chapter of the thesis is devoted to the presentation of the tool, which is the procedure of literature review in the field of strategic management. The author will verify the prepared tool by preparing a literature analysis from the studied scope of strategic management. Finally, the results of the procedure used are discussed, with particular reference to the results in the context of the existence of selection methods for the strategy approach.

The second chapter of the work presents the development of approaches to strategy in strategic management, taking into account in particular its essence and genesis, precursors of strategic management in Poland and in the world. A special place is occupied by a review of selected classifications of strategic management schools divided into classical and contemporary approaches.

The third chapter contains a description of the method of identification proposed by the author of the strategy in strategic management with a particular description of the prepared questionnaire for questionnaire surveys and direct interview.

The fourth chapter is a report from empirical research on the verification of the method of identifying approaches to strategy in strategic management of enterprises in the FMCG food sector. It has a cognitive, methodological and utilitarian overtone.

The survey consisted of conducting a questionnaire using the questionnaire (the first part of the survey) and direct interviews (the second part of the survey) also using the questionnaire. The study was carried out each time according to the questionnaire prepared by the author.

The first part of the study was conducted using the CAWI method using the webankieta.pl web application. Companies took part in the study from the sector of food products according to section 10 of PKD, with the invitation to participate in research, over 800 entities were referred to. Finally, 111 feedback surveys were obtained. A direct interview was conducted among employees of a selected Polish company from the sector of other food products.

The time range of empirical research includes the period:

- verification study: September 2014, April 2015,
- basic research: the period from September 2017 to October 2018.

The spatial scope of empirical research includes the domestic market.

The last chapter of the study indicates the directions of using in theory and practice the methods of identifying approaches to strategy in strategic management, which is based on empirical research of companies from the FMCG food sector, as well as on the author's extensive literature. First, the directions of using the proposed method appear in theory in the context of a strategic demand, then the use of this method is discussed in managerial practice that can serve to improve the management of development in an enterprise.

In connection with the above, the layout of the work is as follows:

Introduction

1. Critical review of the subject literature on strategic management in the area of approaches to the strategy

1.1. Bibliometric study of the state of knowledge in the area of strategic management – assumptions

1.2. Bibliometric study of the state of knowledge in the area of strategic management - results of the study

1.3. Bibliometric study of the research gap regarding the procedure of choosing a strategy approach in strategic management - research results

1.4. Bibliometric study of the state of knowledge in the area of strategic management – report in the PRISMA 2009 Flow Diagram layout

1.5. Bibliometric study of the state of knowledge in the area of strategic management - summary

2. Development of approaches to strategies in strategic management

2.1. The essence and genesis of strategic management

2.2. Pre-managers of strategic management in Poland and in the world

2.3. Classification of approaches and schools of strategic thinking

2.3.1. Review of selected classifications of strategic management schools

2.3.2. Classic approaches to strategy

2.3.2.1. Planning approach

2.3.2.2. Positional approach

2.3.2.3. Resource approach

2.3.3. Contemporary approaches to strategy

2.3.3.1. Innovative and entrepreneurial approach

2.3.3.2. Network approach

- 2.4. Summary of the analysis of approaches to the strategy
- 3. The concept of the method for identifying approaches to strategies in strategic management
 - 3.1. Research methods in management sciences
 - 3.2. Assumptions and procedure of the method for identifying approaches to strategies in strategic management
 - 3.3. Verification of the utility of the method for identifying strategy approaches in strategic management
 - 3.4. Method for identifying strategy characteristics and strategic management in enterprises from the FMCG food industry using a questionnaire for surveys
 - 3.5. A method of identifying strategy characteristics and strategic management in enterprises from the FMCG food products sector using an interview questionnaire
- 4. Results of the study of the main approaches to the strategy in strategic management of enterprises and strategic characteristics as well as strategic management in the FMCG food sector
 - 4.1. Selection of the research sample
 - 4.2. Results of the study of the main approaches to strategy in strategic management of enterprises in the FMCG food sector
 - 4.3. Results of the research on the main strategic features and strategic management of enterprises in the FMCG food products sector using a questionnaire for surveys
 - 4.4. Results of identification of strategy characteristics and strategic management in enterprises from the FMCG food industry using an interview questionnaire in a selected company from the FMCG food sector
- 5. Directions of using in the theory and practice the methods of identifying approaches to the strategy in strategic management
 - 5.1. Directions of use in the theory of methods for identifying approaches to strategies in strategic management
 - 5.2. Conclusions and implications of using the method to identify approaches to the strategy in strategic management for managerial practice

Literature, List of Tables, List of drawings, Charts index, Attachments

Conclusions

The achievements of strategic management have, therefore, a huge variety of models and business tips on how and strategies to create. These hints are often contradictory, and individual models work well in organizations of a certain type or are difficult to implement in practice at all. Strategic management in fast growing, high volatility sectors and unpredictability, will be different than management in stable sectors, with a predictable development trajectory.

The more complex the environment, the more mature and developed the organization, the more sophisticated management methods it introduces, the more perfect the system of planning, predicting and seeking certainty for the future. Hence the improvement of the management methods themselves, including - strategic ones.

The development of methods of strategic diagnosis, including diagnosing the environment, is significant. The dependencies in business change, the capacity and dynamics of the market change, opportunities and threats for individual enterprises change, and finally - the possibilities of the enterprises themselves change: their strengths and weaknesses.

Strategic management is the most important strategy for strategic management as a result of strategic selection of the top management of the organization. Strategy formulation is a complex process, also developing and improving according to new methods.

There is little information on the methods available in the literature, thanks to which it is possible to identify the approach to the strategy itself. Most authors focus either on the evolution of the concept or on citing different classifications of approaches to strategy. It is not the task of this sub-chapter to decide on the definition of approaches to the strategy or on the reasons for its authors. At this point, however, one should refer to the very essence of the tool, which allows to identify which approach to the strategy is characteristic for a given company, so that its relations with the market operations can be understood.

The company's strategy answers the question "How" an enterprise imagines its operation in a given period, considering that it wants to achieve specific goals, has specific resources and operates under specific conditions. However, one should ask the question: "Why" the enterprise chose such a strategy, broader approach to the strategy? Does he do it consciously? Are appropriate tools suitable for its implementation and implementation ?, i.e. answer the question: what tools the company has at its disposal to choose the strategy building method.

The approach to managing a strategic enterprise, understood as the process of preparing and making strategic choices, implementing choices, or strategies, is the attitude represented by the strategist determining his way of thinking on the methods of adapting the enterprise and its environment, as a consequence defining the behavior and decisions of the strategist, and through it - the expected behavior of the company's employees and its activities as a whole.

Strategic management, in the meaning of preparing strategic options and making choices, is therefore perceived as based on the scientific and analytical basis of the process of making rational decisions by strategists.

With reference to the method of identifying approaches to the strategy undertaken in the study, it is stated that in the scientific studies of other authors there are contents regarding strategic goals of enterprises and economic criteria for their selection and ways of achieving them. In particular, the considerations concern the sources and methods of shaping and using in practice a competitive advantage. In studies dealing with the problem of strategic management in general, their authors are limited to the description of analytical determinants of the choices, focusing on methods and techniques of analyzing the environment and interior of enterprises and formulating normative recommendations regarding strategic choices. The identification of approaches to strategy in the sense assumed by the author of the dissertation is not a new subject of research, but certainly not explored conceptually and researched. The analysis of the existing research work confirms the gap in the lack of the method of identifying approaches to strategy in strategic management.

Therefore, it was difficult to explain the problem of identifying approaches to the strategy in strategic management. The presentation in the first chapter of the critical review of literature, allowed to identify the cognitive gap in the method to identify approaches to the strategy, prompting to undertake research, enabling, building, adapting and verifying the aforementioned method, which was the author's superior expectations. The cognitive gap became an inspiration to formulate a research model, carry out research and transfer conclusions.

The main idea of the concept of strategic management as applied science is primarily design solutions that streamline the processes of creating and implementing strategies.

Strategic management is primarily about proposing the choice of strategies that will ensure success and such methods and procedures for strategic management that will enable more effective management of the organization's development.

Therefore, the effect of the dissertation is the method developed to identify approaches to the strategy in strategic management, which will be universally and useful for various types of enterprises operating in various sectors to identify approaches to the strategy. It can be assumed that it is verifiable in practice (this results from the conducted research) and can bring real effects to the enterprises that apply it.

Of course, it is difficult to determine the best measure of business success. Even harder about the measure of good strategic management. Is the measure of company success a correctly identified approach to strategy? Certainly, it increases the probability that the more precisely the approach to the strategy in a given company is identified, the better will be the adjustment of strategic management tools in enterprises, the more effective will be the implementation and implementation of the strategy.

Many research projects avoid unambiguous decisions on this issue, focusing on describing and comparing strategic management practices in enterprises of various types or in various market situations. In addition, such research may enable relative assessments of strategic management by reference to the practices of individual enterprises in a given market sector.

One of the basic assumptions of the method was to say that a good and universal method of strategic management is one that works well in the practice of enterprises.

Empirical studies of enterprises prove that they are identified in the literature, approaches to strategic management are also used in business practice, although most managers are certainly not fully aware of the approach that they represent. On the other hand, research shows that classical approaches (nearly 72% showed features of classic approaches) from the described approaches to strategic choices, more broadly - to strategic management, ie positional, planning and resource management, are approaches present in business practice. They can at the same time be considered as dominant approaches among the management staff operating in Poland.

The positional and planning approaches identified in practice clearly differentiate the behavior of enterprises. Each of the group of entities is characterized by other features, also "metric", and above all the goals and methods of their implementation.

Thus, approaches to strategic management should be considered as an attribute of enterprises that, although influencing their strategic choices, does not entitle taxonomy to success or failure. Given the multidimensionality of approaches to strategic management and their use in strategic selection processes, it is necessary to undertake a more detailed search to clarify the relationship in

relation to this success or failure. It remains to be determined whether and to what extent the characteristics of the environment and its perception, as well as the resources of the enterprise, influence the type of choices made and the consequences of their implementation in a given enterprise.

According to the author's intention, quantitative empirical studies were carried out, thanks to which it was possible to verify the tool, which is the method of identifying approaches to the strategy. The conducted research procedure allowed to verify the hypothetical value of this method and thanks to that a target tool for use in theory and practice was created.

It can be assumed that thanks to the practical verification of the usefulness of the components of the developed tool, it will be a solution that will improve the management of development in the enterprises.

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