

Power Distance and Strategic Decision Implementation: Exploring the Moderative Influence of Organizational Context

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Abstract

This study examined the strategic decision implementation process. It focused on the factors affecting its implementation. Aiming at exploring the moderative role of the organizational context. As well as the power distance supporting the implementation of the strategic decision. To reach the goal of the study, and address the gap. Two hypotheses have been put. The first focused on the role of power distance in implementing strategic decisions. The second focused on the moderative role of the organizational context and its impact on the relationship between them. Where these two hypotheses were examined in one of the educational institutions (Al-Kufa University). The study sample consisted of (75) individuals. The study data were processed using SmartPLS. The results revealed that there is an effect of the power distance in the implementation of the strategic decision. Supported by the moderative effect of the organizational context. Some of the recommendations of the study, pay attention to the motives that the administration urges in the process of implementing the strategic decision. Enabling middle management to deal with strategic decisions.

Keywords: Power Distance, Strategic Decision Implementation, Organizational Context, Moderation Effect.

Introduction

Management in various companies takes strategic decisions and follows up on their implementation. On this basis, management emerges as a major driver behind the company's success (Lee & Park, 2006:198). Therefore, management is interested in making strategic decisions that lead the company to success. The strategic decision is not a simple process but is based on data, not perceptions, facts, not motives, and decision-making is done in the interest of the company, not the interest of individuals (McDougall & Oviatt, 1996:26). When the company's management intends to make and implement a strategic decision, there must be a strategic goal on which the strategic decision is based. This matter is only for senior management and the fact that the success of any company needs a senior management that is aware of what it is doing. This argument is in line with the perspective of some researchers, who have shown that the top managerial layer (senior management) in an organization is responsible for strategic decisions. These researchers assume that the company's senior managers are the strategists who determine the way of their organizations (Boeker, 1997:169; Hambrick & Mason, 1984:190). Based on this logic, senior managers study the nature of objectives, determine their strategic dimension, and then study decisions carefully. Usually, the level of studying the decision is consistent with their cognitive orientations, cognitive abilities, values, and experiences, which must be at the highest levels, which can affect organizational performance. Therefore, differences in cognitive processes and managerial experiences influence aspects of strategic decision-making processes, which include information search and processing (Cyert & March, 1963:18; Daft & Weick, 1984:293; Haleblan & Rajagopalan, 2006:1019). Where the higher-level theory was applied within the scope of strategic decisions (Carpenter, 2002:281; Jaw & Lin, 2009:230; Dalton ET AL.,2000:1158). This gives the possibility of studying the power distance in applying strategic decisions. Because the success of strategic decision-making and its implementation helps in expanding the future goals of the company. It is an important indicator of the success of its current goals, represented by most companies with profitability and growth (Varaiya et al.,1987:489). The power distance is usually closely linked to senior management. It is not determined by the nature of the administrative method adopted by the management in the company. nor the nature of the tasks being performed. Rather, it stems from the leadership structure in the company, and the nature of the organizational context (Pasa, 2000:415). Therefore, the organizational context is a source of concern for senior management regarding the nature of implementing strategic decisions. On this basis, the power distance changes in knowing the limits of organizing the process of implementing the strategic decision. Management is also interested in how to follow up on the implementation of decisions. The contextual dimension is considered a ruler in the dominance of the decision (Ghosh, 2011:90). On the other hand, the organizational contexts interact with the size of the leader's influences on the situations the organization goes through and his role in those situations. Therefore, the power distance is an interactive value with the organizational context (Farh et al., 2007: 718). Based on what was mentioned, this study found a knowledge gap in the application of the decision. Starting from the investigation rarity of the importance of organizational context. As an interactive element in the process of implementing the strategic decision. Also, extended lack of studying these factors (power distance and organizational context) in the implementation of the strategic decision. Knowing that the importance of implementing the decision is no less than the importance of decision-making. Rather, the successful implementation process reveals the management's efficiency in strategic decision-making. Therefore, this study attempts to highlight the importance of power distance in the implementation of strategic decisions. and explore the influence of the organizational context. The study attempts to identify a cognitive control of how to follow up the implementation of the strategic decision by using scientific tools stemming from the essence of senior management. Because the power distance is one of the most important elements that are used in the implementation of the orders of senior management (Hickson et al., 3003: 1305). The importance of the study is also embodied in diagnosing and following up on the impact of the relationship between the power distance and the strategic decision through the moderation of the organizational context. The organizational context provides an environment for carrying out tasks and following up on implementation based on situational factors (Ghosh, 2011:90).

Literature Review

Power Distance

Hofstede (1980) mentioned that the power distance is an expression of the influence size of the superior on the subordinate. Also, it was shown that the power distance is when the strong leaders tend to maintain or increase the power distances and the tendency of the less powerful to reduce them (Hofstede, 2001:14). This depends on the nature of the organizational context and the level of influence of the leader on individuals. Power distance varies according to the nature of the decision, whether it is participatory or central, and the nature of the hierarchical chain within organizations (Hofstede, 2001:16). In high-powered organizational cultures, powerful individuals are seen as superior,

inaccessible, and paternalistic, and are expected to lead forcefully and sometimes authoritarian (Daniels and Greguras 2014,1205). Since individuals with power are seen as superior and elite. Those with less power accept their positions in the hierarchy, trust their leaders, and accept their judgment (Kirkman, 2009:747). Furthermore, power distance is associated with being more task-oriented and less person-oriented. Because high-powered distance cultures set a framework for getting things done. It maintains the social distance inherent within hierarchical relationships (Bochner and Hesketh, 1994:235). As such, leaders in this type of organizational culture are more likely to value power and status. On the other hand, the low power distance is evident in decentralized organizations, because power is spread in them, powers are distributed, and decisions are taken based on the interests of organizational units. Therefore, the nature of decisions in it is participatory, and the role of leadership is advisory (Schwartz, 1999:3). As such, the strong power distance should be seen as no better than the less powerful. The distance of power varies according to the individual, group, organizational, and societal levels. Levels of analysis issues must be considered at any level. For the power distance to be depicted at the optimal level and to set the best and most accurate measures (Daniels and Greguras, 2014: 1205).

Organizational Context

The organizational context represents a set of circumstances or facts related to a situation. It refers to the organizational characteristics that the individual deals with daily and with other environmental factors (Rousseau, 1978:523). Johns (2006) conducted a study that considered organizational context as an influencing factor in the field of organizational behavior. Defined it as a set of circumstantial opportunities and determinants that affect organizational behavior and the nature of functional relationships. On the other hand, Armstrong (2007) showed that the organizational context takes into account all variables, events, and situations, at the level of the internal environment and the external environment. Thus, the organizational context is affected by globalization, innovation, and technology. According to Armstrong's (2009) analysis, the organizational context affects the nature of the relationships between employees themselves and between employees and management. Because according to the organizational context, a kind of climate is created among the employees. The organizational context includes organizational culture, people, organizational structure, organization size, technology, key activities, and work practices. Therefore, it is important to address the opinions that showed the importance of the organizational context and its impact on management style, technology, the nature of tasks, information systems, human resources practices, and organizational culture. For example, the study of Parker and Ohly (2008), indicated the importance of the organizational context in developing an intellectual perspective that individuals talk about in their organizations, which contributes to reducing the volume of contradictions in management and provides a suitable environment for creating truth and moving away from illusion in dealing. Because organizations, by their nature, need a workable environment and the possibility to express opinions on a routine basis, which contributes to strengthening belonging and not being drawn behind temptations offered by other organizations (Parker and Ohly, 2008:285). Some researchers are interested in the importance of providing a positive organizational context for the application of positive tools that improve the capabilities of human resources, as it is the main element in the success of implementing strategic decisions. As well as performance management practices and the role of training in performance management, multi-source feedback, and employee recognition, which represent the main characteristics of many successful organizations in implementing strategic decisions. (Haines, 2012: 1861).

Strategic Decision

Strategic decisions are the decisions that deal with the health and destiny of the organization in the long term (Hitt and Tyler, 1991:299). Usually, it starts from the top management in the organization, which takes a long-time horizon (Demir and Söderman, 2007:232). Decisions that need extensive study, care, and focus (Karacapilidis, 2006:180). Also are the decisions that need to focus on the rational side, because they relate to scarce resources, high technologies, or arduous tasks (Hennessey et al., 2022:2). Therefore, it can be said that strategic decisions are very complex and include a set of dynamic variables. The salient feature of strategic decisions is that they have a strategic dimension and a very significant impact that sometimes leads to the exit of the organization from the market (Salem et al, 2007:136). On this basis, Harrison (1996) (Prof. /University of San Francisco - USA) developed. Five characteristics from which the strategic decision is inferred, 1) the Decision must be directed towards defining the relationship between the organization and its environment; 2) the Decision must deal with the organization as one organizational unit when analyzing; 3) the Decision must include all major activities and functions performed in the organization; 4) Decision must provide guidelines to be followed by the administrative and operational activities of the organization; 5) Decision must be of critical importance to the long-term success of the organization as a whole (Harrison, 1996:46). Hence, we infer that the strategic decision represents a state of optimal balance, which depends on awareness of

external conditions and the skillful use of internal resources. This is based on the size of the power used by management in determining and implementing the decision (Harrison et al., 2001:172).

Hypotheses Development

The Effect of Power Distance on a Strategic Decision

Power distance is an important factor in the organizational structure for managing strategic decisions in organizations. For example, Schermerhorn & Bond (1997) assert that power distance is one of the most enduring and relevant to the performance of organizations. Because organizations are complex social systems. It may or may not be hierarchically organized in terms of status and power. But power distance determines how well senior managers relate to lower-ranking employees, with implications for the entire system. A review of the literature indicates that power distance influences regulatory action. As the power distance affects strategic planning (Ayoum & Moreo, 2008:15; Schneider & Meyer, 1991:318; Schneider, 1989:165). Approaches to a strategic decision (Khatri, 2009: 7; Martinsons & Davison, 2007: 7; Dimitratos et al., 2011: 201;). Organizational communication (Richardson & Smith, 2007:499). Team performance sharing (Newman & Nollen, 1996:776; Sagie & Aycan, 2003:470). Organizational structure and management style (Khatri, 2009: 7). In short, all of the aforementioned aspects of influence can be based on the assumption of the following:

H1: power distance would be significantly linked with a strategic decision.

The Moderative Role of Organizational Context on the Relationship between Power Distance and Strategic Decision

Martinsons (2009:298) found that organizational contexts in high-distance organizations use vertical communication information systems to enhance hierarchical controls of business activities. Furthermore, decentralized and informal organizational structures are an advantage for low-distance cultures (Chan, 2002:98). Reduced power distance increases teamwork, which can enhance strategic alignment (Begley & Zhang, 2011:212). On the other hand, a study by (Ghosh, 2011:98) examined the choice of preference between a high or a low power distance. The study found that it is not related to the nature of the power distance used in the organization, but rather the nature of the relationships between leadership and individuals. Where the study indicated that the power distance needs contextual skills related to guidance and encouragement. High power distance can also lead to leader-centered nurturing, which are positively associated with friendly guidance and encouragement. We argue that power distance-based power should give way to functional, expert, referential, and informational power rules for paternalistic considerations in high-power distance cultural groups. Rather than following the individual values on which the guidance of individuals is based if familial and cultural values such as affection, dependence, and interpersonal relationships are given precedence. The decision can be implemented successfully. Therefore, the following can be assumed:

H2: organizational context moderates the relationship between the power distance and strategic decision.

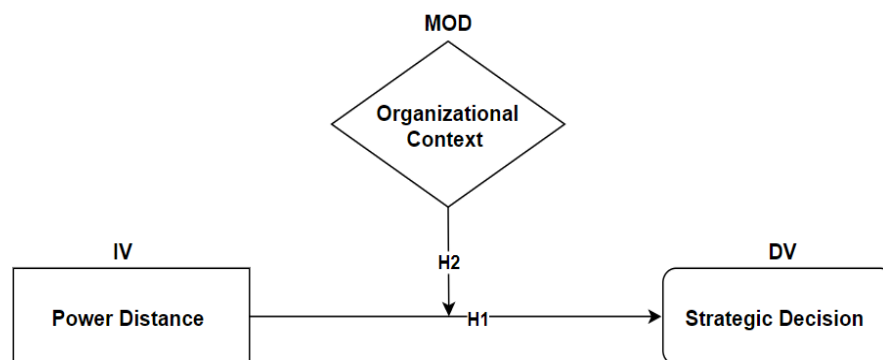


Fig. 1: Conceptual Framework

As shown in fig. 1, the framework of this study reflects the relationship between variables. Influence of Power Distance on the Strategic Decision and moderative effect of Organizational Context on the relationship between them. This framework was constructed based on (Sekaran&Bougie, 2016:75).

Research Methodology

Sample Selection and Data Collection

This study used a positivist paradigm with a survey method. More specifically, primary data obtained directly from respondents was collected using a questionnaire technique. The study's sample was drawn intentionally from managers on all managerial levels at Al-Kufa University. Eligibility criteria required respondents to have achieved the following: (1) they are workers at a high, mid, or low level; (2) their organizational tenure is more than one year; and (3) they have at least three years of experience. The original survey items are in English. Questions have been translated into Arabic based on the procedure put by Brislin (1970). A back-translation technique was applied by an academic competent in both English and Arabic to ensure its validity. Moreover, items in the translated questionnaire have been checked by managers and academics to ensure their relevancy and comprehension. The researcher distributed 86 questionnaires. The number of questionnaires received was only 79. Because of incomplete questionnaires, 4 of them have been excluded. Thus, 75 were used in the final set of data. Table 1 shows the demographics of the participants. The final sample comprised 0.05 percent high-level workers, .42 percent mid-level, and .54 percent low-level. .28 percent of respondents had an undergraduate degree, and .72 percent had a master's degree or above. The average respondent's tenure was 3.8 years. Age, most of the participations had 50-59 years.

Table 1: Demographics of the Participations

Demographics	Frequency (n=75)	Percent
Gender		
Male	61	81.4
Female	14	18.6
Job position		
High-level managers	4	0.05
Mid-level managers	31	.42
Low-level managers	40	.54
Age		
40-49	30	.40
50-59	39	.52
≥60	6	0.08
Academic qualifications		
Undergraduate	21	.28
Post-graduate	54	.72
Organizational tenure		
1-3	58	.78
3-6	17	.22

Measurement of Variables

The three primary variables in the present study include power distance as an independent variable and organizational context as a moderator variable. while a strategic decision is a dependent variable. This study adopts well-established scales from the existing literature to measure the variables in the research model. The current research operationalizes variables as a one-dimensional construct using numbers of items adapted from previous studies as the following. Concerning the independent variable (Power Distance), adapted the scale of (Kirkman et al., 2009: 763) And used (8) items. The moderator variable (Organizational Context), used (7) items, and the scale of (Úbeda-García,2020:8) was adopted. In contrast, Strategic Decision was measured adapted from (Harrison.,1996:53). By (4) items were used. Some scales have been reduced or expanded following the research purpose (Sekaran&Bougie, 2016:142). A seven-seventh Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree) was utilized to operationalize all the concepts.

Assessment of Measurement Model

Present study partial least squares (PLS) modeling has been used, to investigate the scale and structural model. with the SmartPLS 3.3.3 version (Ringle et al., 2015). Because it does not need the normality assumption and survey research is not normally distributed (Chin et al., 2003). Current research utilized a two-step strategy, as introduced by Anderson and Gerbing (1988), to test the model. Following the directions of Hair et al. (2019) and Ramayah et al. (2018), the measurement model was to ensure validity and reliability, and then ran the structural model to test the hypotheses. Estimated the loadings, composite reliability (CR), and average variance extracted (AVE), for the measurement model. The loading estimates should be 0.7, the CR should be 0.7. and the AVE should be 0.5.

Table 2 shows that the AVEs are all greater than 0.5 and the CRs are all greater than 0.7. The loadings were also satisfactory (Hair et al., 2019). Except for the third item (employees who often question authority sometimes keep their managers from being effective) Power Distance, was less than these estimates. Therefore removed from the model. Table 2. shows the study measures and the questionnaire that was adopted and adapted based on the previous literature.

Table 2: Result of a Measurement Model

Construct	Items	FL	CR	AVE
Power Distance (Kirkman et al., 2009: 763)	In most situations, managers should make decisions without consulting their subordinates.	0.742	0.93	0.655
	In work-related matters, managers have a right to expect obedience from their subordinates.	0.772		
	Once a top-level executive makes a decision, people working for the company should not question it.	0.819		
	Employees should not express disagreements with their managers.	0.837		
	Managers should be able to make the right decisions without consulting with others.	0.88		
	Managers who let their employees participate in decisions lose power.	0.838		
	A company's rules should not be broken—not even when the employee thinks it is in the company's best interest.	0.771		
Organizational Context (Úbeda-García,2020:8)	Context in my organization help managers to devote considerable effort to developing subordinates	0.772	0.924	0.635
	Context in my organization help Managers to push decisions down to the lowest appropriate level.	0.855		
	Context help managers have access to the information they need to make good decisions.	0.817		
	Context in my organization offers to managers ability to issue creative challenges to their people instead of narrowly defining tasks.	0.767		
	Context in my organization offers to managers business goals and performance measures to run their business.	0.839		
	Context help managers to put criteria that give them hold people accountable for their performances.	0.764		
	Context in my organization help manager encourage and reward hard work through incentive compensation	0.76		
Strategic Decisions (Harrison.,1996:53)	Are your strategic decisions successful for the most part?.	0.869	0.888	0.664
	Are your strategic decisions made after an objective gap analysis of your entire organization?.	0.784		
	Do your strategic choices regularly embody the common set of characteristics advanced for the profile of a successful strategic choice set forth in this article?	0.791		
	Do you regularly employ a process approach to your strategic decisions?	0.812		

Table 3 depicts the assessment of discriminant validity using the Fornell and Larcker (1981) criterion. As illustrated, the square root of the AVE of each construct is larger than the correlation estimates of the constructs. This indicates that all the constructs are distinctly different from one another, implying that each construct is unique and captures phenomena not represented by other constructs in the model (Hair et al., 2014).

Table 3: Discriminant Validity

Variables	Organizational Context	Power Distance	Strategic Decisions
Organizational Context	0.844		
Power Distance	0.797	0.81	
Strategic Decisions	0.791	0.739	0.815

Assessment of Structure Model

In this study, 2 hypotheses were assumed to answer the study questions. For the testing of hypotheses, parameter estimates for statistical significance and coefficient values were evaluated using a bootstrapping method based on PLS-SEM (Hair et al., 2017). The bootstrapping method with 5000 bootstrap re-sampling and bias-corrected confidence intervals was utilized to examine the significance of the path coefficients. Table 4. shows the results of the structural model assessment.

Table 4: Hypotheses Test

HY	Direct	O	M	S. D	T Statistics	P-Values	Result
H1	Power Distance -> Strategic Decisions	0.249	0.241	0.145	1.716	0.043	Supported
Moderator							
H2	Moderating Effect -> Strategic Decisions	0.250	0.243	0.135	1.851	0.040	Supported

The first hypothesis presumes that a power distance positively affects a strategic decision implementation. This hypothesis is supported based on the analysis result ($\beta = 0.249$, $p < 0.05$). That means there is a significant and positive relationship between power distance and strategic decision implementation. The other hypothesis (H2) predicts that organizational context has a positive effect on the relationship between power distance and strategic decision. This hypothesis is supported based on the analysis result ($\beta = 0.250$, $p < 0.05$).

Discussion

The results of the study indicate that there is a vital effect of the power distance in the implementation of a strategic decision. This supports the first hypothesis (H1), which assumed the aforementioned effect. This result coincides with the options that have been put forward about the importance of the power distance effect. It is accompanied by vital elements in realizing the value of management and the dominance of the leader at the social level (Adaba et al., 2015). By domination, we do not mean control of an authoritarian nature. Which is to impose the implementation of decisions without knowing the essence of these decisions the executors themselves. They are outdated ideas. But we mean that management should work hard to clarify the chain of implementation of decisions for subordinates at various administrative levels. The results of the study also showed that the organizational context modifies the relationship between the power distance and the implementation of a strategic decision. The second hypothesis (H2). Support for the second hypothesis shows that the implementation of strategic decisions can be achieved at good levels when there is an organizational context that helps in the success of the implementation process. The organizational context provides a situational environment that helps the implementation process according to the circumstances that the organization faces (Ghosh, 2011). The results of the two hypotheses indicate the possibility of highlighting the identity of the relationship between the variables of the study. This is in line with previous literature. on which the study was based. For example (Pasa, 2000; Ghosh, 2011; Adaba et al, 2015; Hickson et al., 2003). Therefore, it can be said that there is a possibility of expanding the study and generalizing its results.

Conclusion and Future Direction

Strategic decision execution involves a mixture of behavioral patterns, such as rationality, intuition, and improvisation. The line of thought that decision in an organization is not necessarily rational is consistent with Aharoni (1966). This line of thought was indicated by mixing various decisions in one basket. Strategic decision differs from other tactical decisions or standard performance activities. In general, our study concluded that there is a decision that needs to be implemented by individuals who study and know what they are doing. This requires the availability of an organizational context that helps the parties understand each other according to situations that make them have a high understanding of the events. Thus, the role of the organizational context is recognized in the literature by influencing employee behavior, motivation at work, and level of performance. This is reflected in the implementation of the strategic decision. It represents the various activities based on which the organization reaches its strategic goals. On the other hand, it stresses the importance of the space of power in supporting the process of implementing a strategic decision. Hence, we find the importance of understanding that the increase or decrease in the power distance is not based on following an authoritarian vision by the administration, but rather is based on the nature of the administrative organization applied by the organization. Therefore, our study recommended research directions on which future studies could be based.

In this context, future research directions recommended by the researchers emphasize the study of contextual factors, such as, (technology, organization size, organizational structure, organizational culture, organizational climate, etc.) that may affect employee motivation and performance. , with a focus on human resource practices and their relationships within the human resource system (Jiang, 2012). Therefore, it is possible to study these elements in

centralized or decentralized systems to implement a strategic decision. Also, to expand this study there is a need to investigate the role of organizational health as a moderative variable of the organizational context. Because the organizational context is moderate with organizational health, which contributes to creating that appropriate context, with the possibility of showing that verification is better when understanding the relationship during its study. It is also important to conduct a systematic review of the literature related to the strategic decision, as there is a clear confusion of concepts with the possibility of adopting research subjects to solid scientific journals. Finally, we propose to expand our study by adopting two approaches to the power distance by studying two organizations that differ in their organizational structures (centralized or decentralized) and then conducting a comparison investigation between the two methods by adopting advanced analytical techniques, such as a dual-stage multi-group SEM and ANN analysis.

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