

## A BEHAVIOURAL APPROACH TO STRATEGY MANAGEMENT: MAIN DIMENSIONS

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**Abstract.** The article presents the review of the strategy literature especially due to approaches to strategy. The author presents the role of the following schools according to a strategy and strategic management: a planning approach, a positional approach, a behavioural approach, an evolutionary approach, and resource-based view. In accordance with the fact that there is a shortage of research connected with a behavioural approach to strategy in the literature, the author classified behavioural strategies and defined main dimensions of behavioural strategies influencing the types of managers' behaviour and determining discrepancies in behavioural strategies perception. Psychological dimensions and sociological ones avoided in the literature are the main dimensions taken into consideration by the author.

**Keywords:** strategy, approaches to strategy, behavioural strategy, socio-psychological dimensions of behavioural strategies.

**Jel classification:** L10, L21, M10

### 1. Introduction

A review of the literature and the observation of enterprises' reality induce to assume that a starting point for considering determinants (the context) of managerial strategies (including managerial attitudes and behaviour) ought to be a behavioural approach and a resource-based view in strategic management. The strategies of managerial attitudes and behaviour (that can also be called strategic attitudes and behaviour) constitute, on one hand, one of the component of behavioural strategies describing a pattern of general enterprises' behaviour, on the other hand, concern a resource-based view in which a strategy is the best (enabling to gain value) way of using resources and skills. Nevertheless, literature studies show that concentration on concepts classified in a resource-based view and in a positional approach, not on a behavioural one, dominate in theory.

The goal of the article is to present the role and importance of behavioural approach to creating organisations' strategies and to define main dimensions of behavioural strategies influencing the types of managers' behaviour and determining discrepancies in behavioural strategies' perception. In details, the aim of the paper is to present a behavioural approach in comparison with other ones, to emphasise the fact that there are no claims in the literature that assumptions of a behavioural approach to strategic management are frequently used by enterprises. The additional aim of the paper is to pay attention that psycho-sociological dimensions are significant in analysing enter-

prises' strategies in terms of managers' goals and that there is a shortage of considerations about this type of a behavioural strategies' dimension in the literature and practice.

### 2. A behavioural approach to strategy in connection with the other approaches

A planning approach, a positional approach, a behavioural approach, an evolutionary approach, and a resource-based view are the main schools according to the strategy and strategic management.

A planning school, whose main representants are I. Ansoff, E. P. Learned, and C. R. Andrews, derives inspirations from neoclassical economy. The essence is the notion 'Ricardian rent' that means profits made from possessed resources, especially tangible ones. According to this approach, a strategy is a formalized plan of effective and rational goals attained *ex ante*. A potential source of the success is the interior (resources) of an organisation. A strategy is adjusted to environment and oriented towards maximizing profits from resources possessed. Key words are as follows: a plan, long-term, resources and interior, an experience curve, product life cycle, Ricardian rent, profit, SWOT.

The next important school is a positional approach with its representants like M. Porter, and E. H. Chamberlin. According to Chamberlin, an enterprise makes additional profits (a Chamberlian rent) from a special position in environment. Consequently, a strategy is defined as a position towards task environment. The process of formulat-

ing a strategy is formalized. A strategy is a competitive strategy. A strategy is established *ex ante* and is oriented towards taking a particular position in task environment and maximizing profits connected with this position. The sources of the success are sought in organization's environment. Key words due to this approach are as follows: a position, a competitive advantage, an enemy, occasions, threats, competitors, sector analysis, portfolio, profit, Chamberlian rent.

According to a behavioural approach, it is said that people react to particular stimuli. In practice, it is connected with researching processes of learning behaviour responding to stimuli from environment. It is also connected with processes of learning how to make decisions. A strategy is created during the action and is a sum of reactions to stimuli from environment. In most of cases, a strategy is a form of passive assimilation of patterns. Consequently, it is difficult to formalize a strategy. A basic notion of behavioural theories is limited rationality of human choices. According to Tversky and Kahneman, bounded rationality is determined by time pressure and information complexity. People create behaviour called heuristics in order to prevent such deformation. Consequently, heuristics can be regarded as behavioural strategies of action. Decisions are frequently made in conditions of incomplete information. There are many independent variables that are not under human control. People have various needs and goals formulated on the basis of these needs are often contrary as human needs are changeable. Thus, goals are changeable as well. Rationality is disturbed by the conflict of roles and goals. Problems are complex in most of cases and facing these problems is long-term. Key words are as follows: behaviour, incrementalism, stimuli from environment, bounded rationality, case study.

An evolutionary approach is connected with the adjustment of managers' behaviour to changes in environment. The main representatives are H. Mintzberg, and J. B. Quinn. An evolutionary theory treats a strategy as a coherent pattern of decisions and actions evolutionarily created during company's actions (Obłój 2007). An evolutionary approach is interested in such managers' reactions that are the effect of adaptation. The process of creating a strategy is not completely rational. Dominant logic and routines can be regarded as key words. Dominant logic is a universal mechanism that is used by people in a natural and unconscious way in order to explain, understand, and accept the world. A routine is a decisional rule created during companies' evolution.

According to a resource-based view, important actions are as follows: identifying, understanding,

and developing organization's core competences understood as resources and skills related to the context. The interior (especially non-material/intangible resources) of an organization are very important (Peteraf 1993; Barney 1991; Prahalad, Hamel 1990; Rumelt, Schender, Teece 1994; Bratnicki 2000; Kay 1996; Petts 1997; Helfat, Peteraf 2003). A strategy is the best (allowing obtaining a value) way of using resources and skills or the best bundle of such resources and skills. Building a strategy is begun by identification of resources possessed. Next, their potential impact on generating an organization's value is assessed. Finally, a strategy generating a maximum value in a continuous way is defined (Grant 1991). The main assumptions of resource-based view are concentrated on a bundle of intangible resources and their features. A unique bundle of non-material resources/competences (not product-market issues) determines a success of an enterprise. Strategic resources have to be developed internally. They cannot be purchased on resources markets. A stable competitive advantage is generated by resources that are non-imitable, non-mobile, rare, and valuable. Key words are as follows: core competences, non-material resources, interior, resources rent, VRIO analysis, organization's value (added value).

The summary of different approaches to strategy including both features of a strategy in accordance with a given approach and features of organisations included in a given school is presented in the table 1.

Determining behavioural strategies and seeking their dimensions is located both in a resource-based approach and in a behavioural one. A strategy as a concept of enterprises' development and a future position on the market and in the environment depends on possessed resources, unique skills, knowledge, and experience of managers and on identifying occasions as well (Penrose 1959). Enterprises should carefully create a strategy since their strategic decisions mostly concern creating organisation's resources. These resources are frequently cost consuming and they determine the subject specialization of enterprises. On the other hand, possessing these resources determines a competitive position of the company.

Due to a resource-based view, the role of intangible resources in developing a strategy is emphasized. Undoubtedly, the proposal of R. Krupski concerning the identification of a strategy from resources perspective should be taken into consideration. The results of this research on resources and their features show (Krupski 2006) that the most frequently pointed resource regarded as original (rare in the sector, rare and difficult or impossible to copy) are privileged, non-formalised (re-

sulting from personal relations, trust, loyalty, connections, etc.) relationships with participants of environment. The second type of resources pointed as very important for functioning companies was the resource called employees' attitudes and behaviour (what proves the necessity of considering this issue due to managerial strategies).

**Table 1.** A set of approaches to strategy (Source: own study)

Approach	Features of a strategy according to a given approach	Features of organisations included in a given approach
Planning approach	A strategy is maximally adjusted to environment and oriented to maximizing profits from possessed resources (especially tangible ones)	A successful organisation is the organization that has allocated resources in the best way, that has the highest profits, and additionally made a plan of attaining profits
Positional approach	A strategy is oriented to taking a particular position in task environment and maximizing profits related to this position	A successful organisation is the organization that is able to take the best position in environment
Behavioural and evolutionary approach	An incremental strategy, a strategy oriented to learning environment	A successful organization is the organization that is able to negotiate, to conduct competitive games, that can create and implement some routines and that is able to incrementally think about a strategy
Resource-based view	A strategy oriented to a particular bundle of intangible resources and to maximizing value	A successful organisation is the organization that possesses resources which are unique, future-orientated, and contributing to a great added value

A behavioural approach '*postulating a management formula based on activities development and innovation*' (Krupski et al. 2009), being a consequence of behavioural economy, is connected mainly with the research of J. G. March, M. Cyert,

H. Simon, J. von Neumann, O. Morgenstern, D. Kahneman, and A. Tversky. In accordance with a behavioural approach, a strategy occurs during the action and is a sum of stimuli from environment. It is a form of passive adaptation of certain patterns not including in most of cases deepened reflection. Consequently, it is difficult to formalize a strategy and the area of decisional freedom of managers becomes narrower. Researching behavioural strategies means research processes of learning people and/or organisations' behaviour responding to stimuli from the environment. K. Obłój regards that '*according to a behavioural approach the following fact is very important: since the beginning a behavioural approach has challenged a thesis about the unambiguity of enterprise's goals (...), enterprise's goals happen to be various, unclear and contradictory, relations between goals, means and participants' behaviour are at least loose and it is difficult to distinguish goals and means*' (Obłój 2010). J. Komorowski (Czerwonka, Gorlewski 2008) pays attention to the fact that '*it is noticed that investors making decisions focus mostly on emotions. They are not consequent in their choices (...)* Reacting to information, they are subject to cognitive illusion' (Komorowski 2011). M. Romanowska emphasizes the rightness and importance of considering behavioural strategies since '*attitudes of people creating strategies decide about basic issues for strategies: strategic goals, a horizon of strategic plans, strategy aggressiveness (expansiveness), the process of formulating strategy, the process of realising strategy (...)* behavioural strategies determine dominant logic that strategy creators are focused on' (Romanowska 2010).

According to the context, dimensions defining the cohesiveness between the enterprise's strategy and the managerial strategy (goals, attitudes, behaviour) is a relatively new research task since current literature does not concentrate on a behavioural approach. Thus, the problem of cohesiveness between the enterprise's strategy and a manager's own strategy has not been taken into consideration both in theory and in practice and it is possible to verify the view that a dominant approach used by companies in practice is a behavioural one – not a positional school and resources one.

### 3. Behavioural strategies

Among different various strategies that can be regarded as behavioural strategies it seems that the following strategies are the commonest behavioural ones worth describing in the paper: Miles and Snow's strategies, Strategor's strategies, Koźmiński and Obłój's strategies, Idenburg's strategies, Hre-

biniak and Joyce’s strategies, and ‘blue ocean’ strategy.

According to Miles and Snow’s strategies, four strategies are distinguished: a prospector, an analyzer, a defender, a reactor. Organisations implementing a prospector strategy are innovative (a product-market area), orientated to market occasions, developing new products and creating new markets. They regularly experiment with potential responses to emerging environmental trends. Their core competences are sought in marketing and R&D functional areas. Organizations implementing analyzer strategies attempt to maintain their current businesses and to be innovative in new businesses. They avoid an excessive risk and they are concentrated on a limited number of products and effort to beat competitors on the basis of quantitative characteristics. Organisations implementing a defender strategy attempt to protect their market from new competitors. They are concentrated on a narrow area and protect it aggressively. They devote primary attention to improving the efficiency of their existing operations. They can be successful especially when they exist in a declining industry or a stable environment. Reactors are organisations in which a change is perceived, however, they are unable to respond effectively. These organisations do not have a formalized strategy.

Strator regarded three dimensions determining strategies like sector attractiveness, managerial competences, and relationships with environment in the context of safety and certainty. Based on these dimensions, he distinguished the following eight behavioural strategies: champion, independence, rowdy, son, charge, philanthropist, engineer, suicide. These strategies are illustrated in the table 2.

P. Koźmiński and K. Oblój considered three strategies that could be regarded as behavioural ones: an isolation strategy, a redundancy strategy, and an adaptation strategy. Organisations implementing an isolation strategy minimalise relationships with environment, especially due to social-cultural forces. It allows avoiding necessary adaptation simplifying management and keeping external balance. Nevertheless, it hinders to develop internally in a long term. Organisations implementing a redundancy strategy keep resources in excess in order to survive in uncertain conditions and to avoid short-term adaptation. The resources excess enables to neutralize consequences of unpredictable disruptions rapidly. Organisations implementing an adaptation strategy are able to change themselves and their environment. It allows keeping a useful level of external balance in market conditions. It means continuous adaptation by incremental changes.

**Table 2.** Miles and Snow’s strategies (Source: based on: Strategor 1995)

Strategies	Dimensions					
	sector attractiveness		managerial competences		relationships with the environment	
	high	low	high	low	high	low
Champion	×		×		×	
Independence	×		×			×
Rowdy	×			×		×
Son	×			×	×	
Charge		×		×	×	
Philanthropist		×	×		×	
Engineer		×	×			×
Suicide		×		×		×

Idenburg’s strategies, as one of the most interesting classifications due to managerial behaviour, present four views on the process of strategy development. They depend on two dimensions: goal orientation and process orientation. They are presented in the table 3.

**Table 3.** Four views on the process of strategy development (Source: Idenburg 1993)

		Goal orientation (what)	
		Strong	Weak
Process orientation (how)	Strong	Logical incrementalism	Guided learning
	Weak	Rational planning	Emergent strategy

Rational planning is concerned with the development and formulation of attainable objectives. This approach is conceptual, systematic, and is controlled by ‘management by objectives’. The guided learning-process approach attempts to introduce some mental models of reality. Strategy development is the process of continuous improvement. It is difficult to predict the future environment so organisations and their managers must learn quickly. The logical incrementalism recognizes that the planned implementation of a strategy is an illusion. Due to this approach, every strategy development process has elements of goal orientation and process orientation. According to the emergent strategy view, it is not possible to develop explicit objectives in unpredictable and uncertain environment and it is necessary to react in a flexible and accidental way to unpredictable conditions.

Hrebiniak and Joyce’s strategies depend on two dimensions: environmental determinism (the

scope of environment’s impact on the organisation), and managerial choices (possibilities of strategic choices). In accordance with these dimensions, four strategies presented in the table 4 were distinguished.

**Table 4.** Hrebiniak and Joyce’s strategies (Source: based on: Hrebiniak, Joyce 1985)

		Environmental determinism	
		low	high
Managerial choice	high	Strategic choice with maximum adaptation by design	Differentiation and adaptation within constraints
	low	Undifferentiated choice with incremental choice and adaptation by chance	Natural selection with minimum choice and adaptation or selection out

A ‘blue ocean strategy’ created by W. Chan Kim and R. Mauborgne assumes that organisations create uncontested market space, make the competition irrelevant, create and capture new demand, break the value-cost trade-off, align the whole system of a company’s activities in pursuit of differentiation and low cost (Kim, Maugborne 2005).

**4. Dimensions of behavioural strategies - recommendations for further research**

The literature confirms the existence of many motives of entrepreneurs’ behaviour ‘*revealing in the most of cases a hierarchical function of preferences (...)*’ (Basics of strategic choices 2011, p. 95). Managerial strategies mean strategies including mostly managers’ interests.

The main results of the author’s preliminary research conducted in Poland in 2011 (a research project no. ZIF/KSMZ-411/7/11 ‘Managerial attitudes from a strategic perspective’, the sample: one hundred and twenty top managers of enterprises from different sectors, the research method: interviews) confirm that managers in Poland use assumptions of the behavioural approach to strategic management in terms of establishing strategies and running the company. Moreover, what is essential from a behavioural perspective, personal managers’ goals are not convergent with strategic goals of enterprises in most of cases so the concept of attitude cohesiveness occurs. It is assumed that a main source of a lack of attitude cohesiveness

concerns psychological and sociological issues and that psycho-sociological aspects determine the character of managers’ strategic goals in terms of enterprises’ strategies and should constitute one of dimensions of the behavioural strategies model. Additionally, it seems that the problem is independent on a particular sector. It concerns managers from higher levels of management, especially top managers responsible for establishing strategies in enterprises (in different sectors and businesses). Consequently, the research results, observation, and literature studies in the scope of behavioural strategies induce to conduct deepened research in enterprises in Poland. The potential results would partially fill the gap in management science connected with a lack of complex characteristics of behavioural strategies.

To conclude dimensions determining behavioural strategies that occur in the literature, it can be regarded that the following ones are the commonest. Firstly, dimensions defined as external conditions like the character of orientation to environment, sector attractiveness, the character of orientation to markets and products are noticeable. Secondly, dimensions determined as internal ones like the scope of innovation, goal/processes orientation, managerial competences, and the attitude to resources are considered. Next, dimensions typical to the features of a behavioural approach to strategic management like relationships with environment, a level of adaptation, a level of incrementalism, a level of emergent actions, environmental determinism, and managerial choices are regarded. These dimensions are concentrated on organisation’s behaviour in general; however, they are not concerned with personal managerial attitudes and behaviour what should be recognized so as to establish determinants of cohesiveness between formal organisation’s strategies and managerial goals.

Personal managerial attitudes and behaviour constitute the dimension of behavioural strategies that is determined by psychological and sociological conditions. In the literature there are some models concerning attitudes and changes of attitudes that could be used to analyse managerial attitudes in order to develop real determinants of managerial attitudes and behaviour. The most common attitudes models are models of cognitive structures (Fishbein’s model and Fishbein-Ajzen’s models), Cacioppo and Petty's elaboration likelihood model (ELM) of persuasion.

Fishbein’s and Fishbein-Ajzen’s models represent the theory concerning reasoned actions (TRA) and assuming that the best base for predicting planned behaviour are particular people’s attitudes and their subjective norms. These two factors constitute a behavioural intention that creates behav-

behaviour as a result. Thus, the components of TRA are three general constructs: behavioural intention (*BI*), attitude (*A*), and subjective norm (*SN*). TRA suggests that a person's behavioural intention depends on the person's attitude about the behaviour and subjective norms ( $BI = A + SN$ ). The following equation is one of the forms the TRA can be expressed in

$$BI = (AB)W_1 + (SN)W_2 \quad (1)$$

where:

*BI* – behavioural intention,

*(AB)* – one's attitude toward performing the behaviour,

*W* – empirically derived weights, and

*SN* – one's subjective norm related to performing the behaviour (Hale 2003).

Cacioppo and Petty's ELM model concerns the theory that considers how attitudes are formed and changed and it assumes that there are two ways of changing attitudes by means of persuasive communication: a central route and a peripheral route (Petty, Cacioppo 1986, Petty, Cacioppo 1981, Petty, Wegener 1999). Central route processes require a great deal of thought, and therefore are likely to predominate under conditions that promote high elaboration. Central route processes involve careful scrutiny of persuasive communication to determine the merits of the arguments. On the other hand, peripheral route processes, do not involve elaboration of the message through extensive cognitive processing of the merits of the actual argument presented. These processes often rely on environmental characteristics of the message.

Although these models generally are used in the context of modelling customers' behaviour, they can be used to consider behaviour of different groups of people (including managers) as well.

## 5. Conclusions

Behavioural strategies should be recognized as both strategies of the enterprise (strategic goals, etc.) and personal strategies and goals of managers determined by their managerial attitudes and behaviour influencing a strategic course of enterprises. It is believed that a psycho-sociological dimension like managerial attitudes and behaviour is avoided in the literature, however, it should be taken into consideration while considering behavioural strategies undoubtedly.

The necessity to research this profile of behavioural strategies should be expressed so as to 1) describe managers' behaviour determined by a socio-psychological context of behavioural strategies' dimensions, 2) to research behavioural strategies regarding top managers, 3) to research the

reasons for the divergence in perceiving behavioural strategies, and as a result, 4) to determine a deductive model of cohesiveness of managers' strategies and enterprises' strategies. Establishing and verifying a deductively determined model of cohesiveness between managerial attitudes and goals with enterprises' strategies could be a subject of next research due to managerial strategies conducted in Polish enterprises (the object: top managers). The knowledge about potential discrepancies between managerial goals and enterprises' strategies (strategic goals) resulting from psycho-sociological issues could allow to make the process of establishing strategies more effective and efficient. Thus, mentioned aspects should be taken into consideration while setting and implementing enterprises' strategies and it seems that it is not dependent on a type of a sector or business.

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