The Connotation Analysis of Ambidexterity Strategic Alliance

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Abstract. In recent years, it has become a common phenomenon to establish strategic alliances among enterprises. However, due to the contradiction between cooperation and competition among alliance partners, the development of strategic alliance enterprises is in a dilemma. In today's situation, one of the focuses of the enterprise's work is how to have dual capabilities. The second key point is to carry out an effective ambidexterity strategic alliance. The establishment of ambidexterity strategic alliance has become the key to the future of enterprises to obtain adaptive and sustainable competitive advantage. Based on the current theory of strategic alliances and organizational ambidexterity strategy, this dissertation analyzes the ambidexterity strategic alliance from the perspective of learning ambidexterity and innovation ambidexterity, based on the prior variable of context ambidexterity. The conclusion of the study can provide some enlightenment and reflection for the alliance enterprises on how to build an effective ambidexterity strategic alliance.

Introduction

According to the theory of knowledge base, whether enterprises can explore and integrate internal and external knowledge and generate new knowledge that they didn’t grasp before is the basis of whether enterprises can achieve the sustainable development and long-term competitive advantage. Therefore, in the process of competition, enterprises should explore new knowledge by increasing internal investment in R & D and acquire mature knowledge of other enterprises in the same alliance through cooperation with other enterprises. However, with the uncertainty of the economic and political environment and the shortening of the product life cycle, even large enterprises do not have all the resources, and it is difficult to obtain effective knowledge from outside simply by virtue of their own power. Moreover, knowledge creation will also be limited by the enterprise's own knowledge base and resources input. Therefore, more and more enterprises form strategic alliances and broaden the knowledge base through cooperation in order to achieve knowledge creation and breakthrough. However, due to the existence of a variety of strategic paradoxes among alliance partners, the effect of strategic alliance 1 + 1 > 2 is greatly affected. Therefore, based on the pursuit of long-term performance, in order to solve the strategic paradox, deal with the change of the dynamic environment, the increasingly fierce market competition and the limited internal resources and capacity, the strategic alliance must possess ambidexterity capability.

In recent years, under the organizational ambidexterity strategy of learning ambidexterity and innovation ambidexterity has gradually become the focus of scholars focus issues. However, most of the existing literature mainly discusses the dual capabilities within the organization, that is, the team level and the organizational level, but it seldom refers to the dual capabilities at the organizational level represented by the alliance. The connotation of the ambidexterity strategic alliance is very blurry.

Literature Review

Strategic Alliance

The first strategic alliance by the United States DEC president J. Hopland and management scientist R. Nigel first proposed. Subsequently, Linsu Kim et al. Proposed the theory of "organizational learning" to explain strategic alliances. They pointed out that strategic alliances are one of the most important ways to organize learning, and its core lies in learning the knowledge of affiliates.
Organizational Ambidexterity Strategy

Based on the research of antecedent variables of organizational ambidexterity, this paper extends the relationship between learning ambidexterity and innovation ambidexterity, and explores the connotation of ambidexterity strategic alliance.

Organizational Ambidexterity

Ambidexterity organizational theory is a new theory of management and may become a new research paradigm in the field of management science in the future. Since Duncan [4] introduced the concept of dualism into management research for the first time, more and more scholars have become interested in organizational duality. Dual perspectives have been introduced into many management research fields. Gupta A.K [5] explored organizational duality from the time and organizational level. He [6] and Lubatkin [7] argue that "dual organization" should be dualistic (exploration and application) Activities, Cao et al. [8] proposed that duality of organization from the perspective of competitive advantage refers to the ability to make full use of existing advantages and seize new opportunities, which is beneficial to enhance the competitiveness and performance of enterprises.

Based on the research background of this paper, we think that the strategic alliance provides convenient conditions for the enterprises to carry out exploration activities and application activities. The alliance enterprises can acquire the knowledge from the partners while applying their own knowledge, and on this basis, improve the existing products, And through the division of individuals within the enterprise, to ensure that investment in exploring new knowledge, through the organization of duality to enhance their own knowledge base.

Learning Ambidexterity

Organizational learning refers to the process by which an organization encodes its own experience or knowledge of other organizations or organizations. Based on this process, an enterprise can apply knowledge, create knowledge and conduct daily activities. March [9] think that organizational learning contains both exploratory learning and applied learning. At present, there are many researches on single-level organizational learning ambidexterity, but the research on inter-organizational learning ambidexterity is still relatively small. With regard to learning ambidexterity in strategic alliances, researchers have already explored the connotation of related concepts on the basis of a single organizational level. For example, Lavie and Rosenkopf [10] explored the balance between exploratory learning and applied learning in the formation of alliances, but lacked the necessary exposition of the learning ambidexterity after the founding of the coalition. Starting from the types of learning ambidexterity in the process of alliance operations, Gupta et al [5] put forward the concept of dual-balanced and discontinuous equilibrium for exploratory learning and applied learning. Russo and Vurro [11] demonstrated that exploratory learning within an organization can be coordinated with applied learning within an organization, and that applied learning within an organization can be coordinated with exploratory learning across an organization.

Innovation Ambidexterity

Based on the research by March et al., Benner and Tushman [12] explain and distinguish the two kinds of innovations from the knowledge and technology orbit and the deviation between customer and market segmentation. Benner and Tushman [12] demonstrated that there is exclusion between applied and exploratory innovations. Ortenblad [13] proposed that the difference between the two types of strategic behaviors, exploratory innovation and applied innovation, would bring chaos to the enterprise. With the deepening of research, scholars began to question this absolute dichotomy. Tushman and O’Reilly [14] argue that companies should have both the ability to compete in mature markets and the ability to explore new products and services in emerging markets. Lin Hai-fen and Su Jing-qin think that the role of exploration-oriented innovation and development-oriented innovation is more significant, and how the problems should co-exist and need further clarification. Cao et al. [8] and Raish et al. [15] also believe that the current research is not enough to get effective duality.
Context Ambidexterity

Restrictions on resources require SMEs to conduct exploratory and applied activities simultaneously [16]. SMEs are more likely to integrate different activities at a lower organizational level to create a dual-action behavior scenario. Gibson and Birkinshaw [16] formally proposed the concept of "situational duality" and identified that tension, discipline, support and trust are the systematic elements in constructing contextual duality. On the basis of this, Patel P. C et al further studied the mechanism by which synergistic and adaptive capabilities can be obtained and the dual capabilities of the organization improved [17].

Concept of Ambidexterity Strategic Alliance and Connotation of the Discussion

Although we can simply define the ambidexterity strategic alliance as a "corporate organization that pursues both applied and exploratory activities," what is the relationship between the exploration and application activities represented by this "simultaneous"? Is the relationship between exploration and development competitive or complementary? In this paper, we will analyze the connotation of ambidexterity strategic alliance from the perspective of complementary hypothesis-scenario double. Some scholars emphasize that exploration and application activities can produce complementary knowledge, information and resources, and that the mechanism of realizing organizational duality is behavior integration, that is, establishing behavioral situation, knowledge situation or psychological situation to encourage employees to carry out double activities.

Context ambidexterity can be seen as a "meta-level" capability (consistency and adjustability) that links all the functions and levels within an organization. Situational duality that the balance of exploration activities and application activities does not require the organization through the structural, mission or spatial differences to achieve, we should choose an integrated approach to design a mechanism for action, to enable businesses to reasonably deal with efficiency-oriented Conflict between application activities and exploration activities focused on change ensures that strategic alliances can deal with both development and exploration within a single organization. [18] Context ambidexterity is different from duality of structure. When an enterprise with a dual scenario is allied, a context ambidexterity of the alliance scenario is realized. For example, there is an alliance cooperation between dual-mode enterprises such as ABCD and scenario A enterprises And B enterprises explore the alliance in the area p, B enterprises and C enterprises in the q-area application alliance, C enterprises and D enterprises to explore alliances in the m-area, D enterprises and A enterprises to develop alliances in the n-area, four enterprises have the scenario duality (Or part of the dual structure of the enterprise), thus expanding the dual activities of a single enterprise to multiple enterprises, forming a ambidexterity strategic alliance.

From another point of view, the duality of the strategic alliance with the duality of the situation can also be seen as two dimensions that have obvious differences but have certain connections: one is defined as balance dimension of ambidexterity, and the other is defined combined dimension of ambidexterity. These two dimensions play a role in the alliance's performance in completely different ways. The balance dimension can be defined as the absolute difference between exploration and application, that is, the relative size. The combined dimension can be defined as the interaction result between exploration and application, that is, the absolute level. The balance dimension measures the proportion of resources explored and applied to an enterprise alliance, and the federation dimension measures the performance achieved within a coalition after it has explored and applied a dual strategy [14].

The above research results are extended to the field of situational ambidexterity strategic alliance innovation: the duality of situational innovation balance dimension refers to the high level of exploration-based innovation and applied innovation balance, or more closely match the number of the two. More specifically, when the overall number of applications for an affiliate exceeds the number of explorations, affiliates are more likely to suffer a crisis of outdated products or markets, and if the affiliate tolerates such a risk, it may be possible to shift from applying existing products and campaigns Enjoy short-term success, but such success will be hard to sustain after being subjected to
product and market changes and updates. This situation can lead to a stronger path dependence of the affiliate or rigid core competence, hindering knowledge learning and updating. Conversely, when a coalition excessively emphasizes exploratory innovation and ignores applied innovations, this will bring ineffective rewards to the alliance as a whole and will increase the risk of reaping rewards from costly trial innovations. Based on this logic, the balance dimension suggests that if the balance of application and exploration can’t be balanced, the coalition faces the risk of outdated capabilities or unprofitable crises. On the contrary, if there is a proper balance between the two types of innovations, the alliance can avoid the above-mentioned risks and crises. The core meaning of the combined dimension is that competition between exploration and application processes is not inevitable. On this issue, Gupta[7] states that exploration and application also take place in complementary areas so that there is no competition for resources. Studies by other scholars also support the notion that Brown and Eisenhardt[19] have observed that some coalitions use progressive attention to switch between exploration and application. Recently, Burgelman and Grove[18] also support this view in Intel's long-term research. Consistent with these studies, we can propose that the exploration and application processes support one another and that the effects of both types of innovation are enhanced. In terms of the positive impact of an activity on exploratory activities, a high level of applied activity often enhances the coalition’s ability to explore new knowledge and support new products and markets. Extensive reuse of existing knowledge and resources, managers can better grasp the situation within the Union resources, a better understanding of existing knowledge and resources. This deep understanding enables the coalition to regain the internal resources and knowledge available to restructure capabilities related to new market and new product discovery. All in all, when the coalition maintains a high balance of exploration and application, a highly efficient coalition will have a more positive impact on coalition performance. Further inference, we propose that a high level of exploration and balance of applications will exert the potential of both. This is because if the affiliate application activity is much lower than the proportion of exploration activities, its absorptive capacity is insufficient and newly acquired knowledge and resources can’t be fully absorbed and accepted by the existing knowledge and resources. Therefore, the newly absorbed knowledge and resources can’t be effectively used by complementary application activities. If the coalition’s exploration activity is much lower than the application activity, only less new knowledge and resources enter the coalition, which will limit the application scale of the coalition. In both cases, the interaction between exploration and application activities is limited, and the combined effect is limited. Therefore, a high level of cooperation and a high level of balance have an effect on the performance of enterprises.

These two dimensions are also studied in the organization of learning ambidexterity, we try to analyze the binary scenario of the binary strategic alliance learning. The balanced dimension of learning ambidexterity represents the degree and level of equilibrium between exploratory learning and applied learning in an enterprise. Wang et al.[20] defined the duality as the three states of high energy balance, low energy balance and imbalance using the concept of organic equilibrium, and found that the learning ambidexterity balance significantly improves the enterprise innovation performance, and the high-energy learning ambidexterity balance is more favorable. In the same way, we can deduce that high energy learning ambidexterity balance is more conducive to the improvement of innovation performance. The alliance should actively promote learning ambidexterity among enterprises and allocate resources in a balanced manner between the two learning modes. Balancing the learning ambidexterity play an important role in alliances' growth. The dual dimensions of learning ambidexterity indicate that the exploration and learning of the enterprise are complementary and mutually reinforcing. Colbert[21] argues that the complex abilities created by the interaction between exploration and application transcend the ability of any single innovation to provide additional sources of business competitive advantage. Fang et al.[22] pointed out that the complementarity between exploratory learning and applied learning can improve the absorptive capacity of enterprises to external knowledge and play a positive role in innovation and performance. The empirical study of Wei et al.[23] shows that the interaction between exploratory learning and
applied learning has a positive effect on the performance of new product development. The high cost of exploratory learning determines that exploratory activities among allied organizations require the support of applied activities. The learning and mining of knowledge in the existing technical fields can promote the coalition to explore entirely new fields more effectively to achieve continuous improvement in the level of technological innovation among alliance enterprises, the excavation of existing knowledge and the exploration of new complementary knowledge are common developments. Exploratory learning can increase the knowledge stock among alliance enterprises so as to promote better development of applied learning and innovation. Applied learning can provide low-cost support for exploratory learning and innovation, and the two interact with each other to promote enterprises Innovation performance improvement. At the same time, the interactive utility of learning ambidexterity can also significantly promote the improvement of enterprise innovation performance. Enterprises should give full play to the interactive effect of learning ambidexterity on the innovation and growth of enterprises, instead of artificially cutting apart the two exploration modes of learning and application Come.

**Conclusion**

To sum up, the ambidexterity strategic alliance is based on the common goal of two or more enterprises to coordinate the two dimensions of being able to co-operate with context ambidexterity in order to maintain the competitive edge between the alliance and the enterprise Dualistic contradictions, to achieve a level of learning and innovation exploration and application of the dual balance of network organizations. Through the analysis and exploration of this article, I hope I can bring a new development direction to the strategic alliance organizations in the embarrassment.

**References**


