

INTRAPRENEURSHIP AS A PANACEA TO CORPORATE GROWTH

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Abstract

One thing all cooperate entities and businesses crave for is growth, and a reliable way to bring about this goal is by being entrepreneurial. The act of employees within an organization being entrepreneurial is known as intrapreneurship. This work explores the role of intrapreneurship in facilitating cooperate growth. Intrapreneurship which can also be referred to as employee's entrepreneurial behavior was studied from the dimensions of innovation and proactiveness, while the study of cooperate growth encompassed the overall performance, profitability and sustainability of an organization. A theoretical approach was employed for this study, via the review of related literatures, where intrapreneurship was observed to significantly improve corporate growth. This study recommended that management should put mechanisms in place to ensure that employees are always motivated to bring out their intrapreneurial side.

Keywords: Intrapreneurship, Entrepreneurship, Proactiveness, Innovativeness

Introduction

The harsh economic conditions of the 21st century has made it necessary for business to do whatever it will take to perform optimally, hence the need for a very effective workforce. How the employees who make up the workforce of any organization perceive their relationship with the business determines how much effort they will put to exhibiting entrepreneurial traits such as innovativeness and proactiveness. This display of entrepreneurship within an existing firm is referred to as ‘corporate entrepreneurship’ or ‘intrapreneurship’ (Wennekers, 2008). However, the display of such ownership characteristics by employees is very vital to the continued existence and growth of any cooperate entity.

Intrapreneurship can also be viewed as the act of taking the initiative to undertake a task, whose outcome will be beneficial to an employee’s organization. This implies that the employee was not compelled or instructed to carry out such task. The spirit of intrapreneurship is propelled by the desire of the employee to see his employer’s business succeed. intrapreneurship can be studied on numerous levels, the most common being the organizational and the individual level (Antoncic and Hisrich, 2003). From the organizational approach, studies have been done on the development of new corporate ventures by the entrepreneurial organization, and this is the reason why many businesses have subsidiaries. At the individual level, attention is paid to the personal attributes of the “entrepreneurial employee or intrapreneur” (Pinchot, 2011). However, literature has given more attention to intrapreneurship from the organizational standpoint neglecting the study of the individual effort of employees within the organization to be intrapreneurial. “In order to define corporate entrepreneurship, Sharma and Chrisman (1999) made an inventory of definitions of entrepreneurship in existing organizations. Only two out of 27 definitions were formulated at the level of individuals” This finding from the work of Sharma and Chrisman (1999) says a lot about the need to study intrapreneurship from an individual approach, and this work will focus on that.

Gifford Pinchot used the term intrapreneurship, in the early 1980’s to explain the activities of managers of large corporations who at that time began to understand that entrepreneurial ideas could positively impact the profitability of their business. Intrapreneurship also entails institutionalizing entrepreneurship within the organization so as to help develop the spirit and culture of innovativeness amongst employees within the business. This will also make it easier for employees to display their entrepreneurial abilities since the right environment has already been created. This also means that company infrastructures can be used which puts the corporate entrepreneur in a better position compared to the independent entrepreneur.

Review of Related Literature

Baseline Theory

The Trait Theory

In the study of human personality, the trait theory is very relevant. In this approach to the study of intrapreneurship, personality traits are conceptualized as consistent ways of thought, emotion, and behavior that are displayed in a numerous scenario. The consistency of this pattern makes them become habitual. Major characteristics of traits are, comparative stability over a period of time, varied level of expression amongst various individuals, and a strong influence on individual behavior. Gordon Allport referred to personality traits as dispositions, implying that they portray what an individual is capable of. He explained three forms of

dispositions namely, cardinal dispositions – conspicuous, these are the major traits that are dominant and easy to observe in a person's life an example is narcissism; central dispositions – not as obvious as cardinal traits, but also significant and found in certain levels in an individual; and secondary dispositions – less observable, less consistent traits, and only seen in very specific situations.

More research into the trait theory has identified the concept of factor analysis. This concept explains the identification of patterns in large amounts of available data that are consistent in a way to describe an individual's behavior. Factor models differ with regards to the amount of factor and the level of connection between them. A typical example is the sixteen personality factor developed by Raymond Cattell, they include the following traits: “1) Warmth 2) Reasoning 3) Emotional Stability 4) Dominance 5) Liveliness 6) Rule-Consciousness 7) Social Boldness 8) Sensitivity 9) Vigilance 10) Abstractedness 11) Privateness 12) Apprehension 13) Openness to Change (14) Self-Reliance 15) Perfectionism and 16) Tension. These traits were further broken down to five by other researchers, referred to as the big five by Goldberg (1981). Norman (1963) labelled these five factors as follows: “Extraversion or Surgency; Agreeableness; Conscientiousness; Emotional Stability versus Neuroticism; Culture. They were referred to as the big (5) five because of their broadness

De Jong et al. (2011) while studying intrapreneurial behaviors in organizations, observed that a proactive personality is very pertinent for organizational success. 189 employees and their colleagues in a Dutch company were their sample, and the intention was to match employees intrapreneurial behavior against certain variables such as a proactive personality, demographics amongst others.

Patterson et al. (2009) explains the big 5 traits from an innovation perspective. In their opinion, openness is more linked to innovation than any of the big 5 traits, while highlighting conscientiousness as the least trait linked with innovation. They also noted that the remaining three traits of the five are largely dependent on the environment.

Intrapreneurship

Literatures holds that entrepreneurship is the root of intrapreneurship (Amo & Kolvereid, 2005; Antoncic & Hisrich, 2003; Heinonen & Karvela, 2003; Pinchot & Pellman, 1999) and various researchers describe intrapreneurship as displaying entrepreneurship in a business (Antoncic, 2007; Sinha & Srivastava, 2013; Pinchot & Pellman, 1999; Blundel & Lockett, 2011). Intrapreneurship has to do with carrying out entrepreneurial activities as an employee within the confines of a business organization. These activities may include risk taking, innovation, and proactiveness, amongst others. For any organization to get the best out of their employees in today's world, those employees have to be intrapreneurial. The act of being intrapreneurial entails having an ownership mentality of the business and making sure it thrives. Intrapreneurs exist within the enterprise and follow the goal of the entrepreneurs (Memon, 2010). The major difference between an entrepreneur and intrapreneur is that the entrepreneur is the ultimate risk bearer; hence the intrapreneurs are there to assist him to succeed in his enterprise.

In the views of Sinha and Srivastava (2013), intrapreneurs are “more like entrepreneurs than being traditional managers” Literature has identified four other differences between both concepts, they include:

1. **Setting or context:** Intrapreneurs operate within an existing firm or organization and they are usually staffers of entrepreneurial outfits, however entrepreneurs are venture creators, that is to say, they start a new business (Camelo-Ordaz et al., 2011; Blundel & Lockett, 2011).

2. **Risk and resources:** Intrapreneurs do not need to bring in their resources or go source for capital to make the venture succeed rather the entrepreneur spends his resources on the intrapreneur to ensure he/she delivers. The entrepreneur takes risky decisions on the resources of the entrepreneur, this also explains why most entrepreneurs take the hiring process very serious. However, entrepreneurs use their personal resources and sometimes those of investors to implement decisions in the face of uncertainty (Molina & Callahan, 2009; Camelo-Ordaz et al., 2011). Although Intrapreneurs may expose themselves to professional and reputational risk if they do not deliver on the job, but the entrepreneur is the ultimate risk bearer. This is because his financial resources are directly involved in the venture.

3. **Reward:** Intrapreneurs are usually not rewarded financially based on their performance, but their financial rewards are relatively fixed and it is based on their pre-existing contract of employment. Entrepreneurs and other capitalists in the business tend to get benefits proportionate to the performance of the venture. These benefits may be financial and non-financial (Baruah & Ward, 2015; Morris & Kuratko, 2002).

4. **Tangible and intangible infrastructure:** Most times intrapreneurs use already established structures within the organization where they work to make decisions and accomplish tasks although sometimes intrapreneurs are employed to draw up structures for startups or existing organizations but these structures must be implemented with the approval of the entrepreneur. The entrepreneurs also make sure structures are in place as to how he wants the business to run and be productive before employing people. (Molina & Callahan, 2009; Antoncic & Hisrich, 2001; Morris et al., (2008); Camello-Ordaz et al. (2011))

Proactiveness

The concept of proactiveness is concerned with taking action before it is generally required. The advantage of this attribute is that it puts an individual on the front foot by being ahead. Proactiveness is a very important intrapreneurial attribute which will aid the intrapreneur in delivering in time on tasks. Lumpkin and Dess (1996) discussed entrepreneurial orientation and highlighted five factors which make up entrepreneurial orientation, they include autonomy, innovativeness, risk taking, proactiveness and competitiveness. This goes to show the importance of the concept of proactiveness. Proactiveness is the tactical orientation of a business that displays certain aspects of the entrepreneurial venture when it comes to decision making and implementation. It entails preparing for the future via exploring fresh opportunities which may not have any bearing with the current line of operation or trend which facilitates the introduction of new lines products and services ahead of competition (Okpara, 2009). Proactiveness involves forecasting where the marketing is going, and employing resources to explore opportunities in the forecasted new market. For an intrapreneurial organization, proactiveness leads to the establishment of various subsidiaries dealing in various lines of products, while for an intrapreneurial individual within an organization, proactiveness makes such an employee more efficient and effective, this is because he is able to forecast the internal needs of the organization before they become urgent and takes the initiative to meet those needs. A proactive employee is also able to identify customer's future needs and makes effort to meet such needs before a competitor identifies them and do same.

Boohene, Marfo – Yiadom & Yeboah (2012) notes that proactiveness emphasizes taking initiatives, forecasting, adjusting to future trends, and foretelling expected change towards a particular scenario. It is clearly seen that the core of proactiveness is forecasting the market to

stay ahead of competitors, and it will take only an employee who sees the organization as his own and imbibe the ownership culture to be involved in it. Proactiveness can also be observed as a dimension of entrepreneurial orientation. In this approach, it serves as a forward-looking pattern of anticipating future demands and trends to capitalize on and gain competitive advantage (Kropp, Lindsay & Shoham, 2006). It is also important to note that proactive employees make proactive organizations, because it is the feedback from the employees who interface with the clients and customers that determines how an organization will direct its proactiveness.

Proactive organizations desire to be leaders in the industry wherein they operate, hence they always take the lead for others to follow, they are innovators, they are always willing to take calculated risks, while other firms in the same industry watch out for the results of their venturing before also involving or taking the same step. Covin & Slevin (1986) explains that proactiveness is the extent to which businesses want to lead rather than follow competitors in a trend in areas such as introduction of a new line of product and use of new technology.

Innovation

Innovation is the deliberate effort made towards identifying a problem, and creatively generating a solution for it. Kanter (1989) highlights that “innovation at the individual level is a process that begins with problem recognition and the generation of novel or adopted ideas or solutions”. The concept of intrapreneurship cannot be discussed without talking about innovation. The ability for employees within the organization to be innovative portends great growth potentials for the business. Innovation describes the creation, reception and implementation of new ideas, processes and products within a business; these ideas, processes and products could also be adapted from outside the organization (Kanter, 1989; Van de Ven, 1986). The intrapreneurial attribute of innovation is synonymous with the concept of innovative work behavior, however De Jong (2007) conceptualizes innovative work behaviour (IWB) as the personal attitudes of individuals to intentionally create and introduce novel and relevant ideas, practices and products within a work role, group or organization.

According to Wennekers (2008), literature has identified opportunity exploration, idea generation, championing, and application as innovative work behavior. This work goes further to explore each of the concepts above;

Opportunity Exploration. This has to do with sourcing for opportunities to apply innovation. Doing this entails sourcing for problems or performance gap to bridge, this process can be very tasking especially in organizations where things are seemingly done perfectly. Another approach to opportunity exploration is seeking to develop easier ways to get things done. There might not be a loophole in the process, but the intrapreneur can discover a more seamless process of getting things done that can help save organizational resources. Drucker (1985) expands on the factors that can trigger innovations, in his views they include the “unexpected (unexpected successes, failures or outside events), incongruities (gaps between ‘what is’ and ‘what should be’), process needs (in reaction to identified problems or causes of failure), changes in industrial and/or market structures (changes in contemporary markets like rapid growth, re-segmentation, convergence of separate technologies, etc.), demographics (changes in population features like birth rates, educational attainment, labor force composition), changes in collective perceptions (manufacturing the pill for example was not a sensible business case fifty years ago, but nowadays it is) or new knowledge (scientific, technical or social, or combinations of the three)”.

Idea Generation. This is a very vital part of the innovation process, as it involves the implementation of solution to the already identified gap in the business process or product. It precedes the opportunity exploration process (Wenneker, 2008). Without the idea generation stage, opportunity exploration is not meaningful. In the words of Kanter (1988) “Awareness of a need (opportunity) is one element; ability to construct new ways to address the need is a second”. This brings to bear the importance of idea generation. Individuals are the ultimate source of all ideas Mumford (2000), ideas emanate from individuals within the firm and the quality of ideas from the employees within an organization will determine the quality of service and product that organization will eventually churn out. Ideas generation may relate to new products, services or procedure, exploring a new-markets, modifying the current work pattern, or identifying general solutions to particular problems (Zaltman et al., 1973; Van de Ven, 1986; Amabile, 1988).

Championing. Idea implementation is usually a herculean task, hence the need to form a coalition in order to successfully implement innovative ideas. Champions are individuals within the organization who put a lot of efforts into creative ideas. Most times they are not given the formal role to perform such function, but are pushed by the intrapreneurial spirit which is more concerned with the success of the venture than any other thing. Shane (1994) opines that these individuals exist in informal roles to drive innovative ideas beyond the roadblocks and challenges in their organizations. Most times these individuals are also driven by a strong personal commitment to a particular idea and are determined to make it successful. The essence of the vigor of champions in pushing a new idea or innovation is as a result of the propensity of people to be resistant to change and new way of doing things. People have an intrinsic tendency to return to their original culture or behavior, which has the tendency to sabotages change (Jones, 2004). Championing activities includes “persuading and influencing other employees and pushing and negotiating” (e.g. Zaltman et al., 1973; Van de Ven, 1986; Howell & Higgins, 1990).

Application. This process involves practical implementation of the innovative idea, it happens after the idea has been received by clients and customers and has gained widespread acceptance and people are willing to pay for it. However, before this stage is reached, it takes a conscious and consistent effort from individuals to transform innovative ideas to practical propositions. Application implies engaging in what is necessary to take advantage opportunities Wenneker (2008), it includes activities such as creating a new products or service, and testing to modify them if necessary (e.g. Van de Ven, 1986; Kanter, 1988; West & Farr, 1990).

Cooperate Growth

Cooperate growth is related to the sustained productivity and performance of the organization. Murphy, Trailer and Hill (1996) and Wiklund (1999) have suggested that growth and financial measures are important performance measures for organizations. However, growth emphasizes “increase in sales, employees or market share while financial measures are account-based measures such as return on investment, return on equity, return on sales and net profit margin” (Haber & Reichel, 2005). As much as financial measures are important in determining the sustenance and survival of the organization (Zainol & Ayadurai, 2011), growth measures are more precise and readily available than the financial measures (Wenneker, 2008). For optimum result it is recommended that both approaches be employed to ascertain the performance of the firms. Lumpkin & Dess (1996), Wiklund & Shepherd, (2005) highlights that combining both growth and financial approach give a much reliable picture of the actual performance of the firm than any of the measures separately. Wickham (1988) asserts that the growth of a corporate entity is a unique process, and it can be observed from diver’s perspectives examples are, “financial, strategic, structural, and organizational

aspects.” Financial growth is related to the growth of the company from the business point of view. Financial growth connotes an increase in the income (it may be gross or net) and material resources of the corporation, while strategic growth refers to the manner in which the organization is responding to the external environment of the business and how the firm is developing and using competitive advantage. Furthermore, Structural growth refers to how the company’s organizational structure develops, it displays the internal workings and operations of the business administratively, and how the company progresses in that regards. However, organizational growth may be synonymous with structural growth, it represents the observable changes in terms of the workings and process of the business as a result of expansion, this may result in changes in the organizational culture and entrepreneurial responsibilities.

Bergic and Umihanić (2015) notes that the growth of a corporate entity can be demonstrated in various ways as horizontal growth which takes place internally within the confines of an existing venture, vertical growth, which takes place by connecting end users in phases (with the users of the products such as raw materials) or backwards which connects the business to its suppliers of raw materials, and conglomerated which is concerned with the venturing spirit of the business to diversify its operations. They also went further to identify two forms of growth, namely;

Organic Cooperate Growth

Inorganic Cooperate Growth

Organic Cooperate Growth. This is reliant on the “positive changes” of internal factors, which impact the performance of the business directly. Here, growth is experienced through the surge in profit, income, revenue and market share during the year, this propels every other form or measure of growth as this is often the primary aim of starting most businesses. The consistent increase in sales volume through aggressive marketing and sales of new and existing products to consumers is a major driver of inorganic cooperate growth. A feature of this form of growth is its ability to emanate from within the organization (Internally).

Inorganic Cooperate Growth. Unlike organic growth, inorganic growth relies mainly on external indices whose influence affects the growth of the cooperation. Inorganic growth is rapid, and occurs faster than organic because of its nature and the way it happens. Inorganic growth adds significantly higher income to the business and the synergic effect of mergers and acquisitions (forms of inorganic growth) ensures that this happens in a short time. A practical example is when a company merges with another company to build synergy and approach the market with a joint strategy. This strategy on its own is bound to increase competitive advantage. Mergers and acquisitions are two forms of inorganic cooperate growth.

Isaković (2010) asserts that consistent change in a positive direction result in cooperate growth via the following indicators; annual gross incomes, net profit, production levels, productivity, employee number, new customer’s number, market share, opportunities to engage resources productively, opportunities for development of human resources, opportunities for investment in facilities and infrastructure.

As much as these are indicators of cooperate growth, their increase does not explicitly imply growth, hence the needs for business managers to effectively align and prioritize cooperate interest at every given point in time.

Proactiveness and Cooperate Growth

Literature reveals that proactiveness results in improved organizational performance and growth, because of the strategic nature of this intrapreneurial attribute, which seeks to explore opportunities that are not related to the current operational process (Venkatraman, 1989). Proactiveness facilitates the introduction of novel brands and services before other firms within the industry, exposing them to competitive edge that results in outstanding performance and growth (Okpara, 2009; Rauch, Wiklund & Frese, 2004). Empirically, sales volume, staff development, increased revenue, and market share have all been empirically linked to proactiveness (Krauss, Frese, Freidrich & Unger, 2005; Baba & Elumalai, 2011). These indices mentioned according to Isaković (2010) are clear measures of cooperate growth. Ahimbisibwe and Abaho (2013) in their study on “the effect of entrepreneurial orientation and export performance of SMEs in Uganda”. observed that proactiveness was positively and significantly related to export performance. In the same vein, Boohene, Marfo-Yiadom and Yeboah (2012) who explored “the influence of proactiveness and firm performance of auto artisans in Ghana”, noted that a proactiveness was strongly and positively related with cooperate performance.

Innovativeness and Cooperate Growth.

Innovation which can be seen as a process or series of steps that need to be taken so that a creative idea can be realized, is a major prerequisite for cooperate growth. Sandvick, Sandvick and Duhan (2014) asserts that the creative features of a market offering have the tendency to receive more and better attentions and evaluations even if consumers do not have prior experience with the product. This is facilitated by the propensity of people to be attracted to new things, even if they may be skeptical to trying them out. The goal of Innovation in this regard is to keep the marketplace interesting and sustain the attention of potential buyers. Sandvick, Sandvick and Duhan (2014) studied the importance of innovation in the hospitality industry, in their findings it was asserted that a positive relationship exists between innovativeness and profitability which is a confirmation of the importance of innovativeness for financial success of hotels. Also, Grisseemann, Plank, and Brunner- Sperdin (2013) who carried out an empirical study of 203 managers of Alpine hotels that investigated customer orientation, innovativeness, innovation behavior, and business performance, observed in their findings that innovation has a strong relationship with innovative behaviour, is also related to financial performance. The implication of these findings above is that cooperate growth in terms financials is highly supported by innovativeness.

Conclusion

From the above, it is evident that intrapreneurship is a fundamental ingredient for organizational performance and consequent corporate growth. This study observes that intrapreneurial dimensions of proactiveness has a positive effect on corporate growth, this finding is in consonance with results from other studies which sustain that proactiveness influence the firm performance positively (Boohene, Marfo-Yiadom & Yeboah, 2012; 2013; Baba & Elumalai, 2011). Similarly, Sandvick, Sandvick and Duhan(2014) observed that the intrapreneurial dimension of innovativeness is strongly related to profitability hence innovativeness is a strong prerequisite for profitability in hotel business. These findings further buttress the findings of this work.

Recommendations

From these finding, the following are recommended;

1. Organizations should through their management create an enabling environment that would encourage employees to be innovative. Literature describes this as the

innovation climate. When this is available, it is easy to get the best out of the intrapreneurs.

2. Corporate entities should make conscious effort to motivate employees effectively such that they will have every reason to develop an ownership mentality towards the business and thus become intrapreneurial.
3. Employees are also encouraged to be intrapreneurial as that is a sure way to become indispensable in your employer's business.

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