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Learning and Organizational Change: A Case Study of Using Learning Intervention in a Strategic Management Course

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to examine how learning and organizational change can be constructed using an example of a created model in the case study of a strategic management program in a business school. **Design/methodology/approach:** The conceptualized learning intervention model (LIM) is rooted in an analysis of strategy and organizational change using intervention theory and methods of behavioral science. It also draws from theories of adult learning and development with a focus on building a learning community environment. A case study in a business school environment was conducted with a learning intervention analysis method. **Findings:** The research concludes that strategic management education draws from diverse theoretical perspectives and learning intervention methods constructed from contextual meaning-making of knowing within practice outlined as interventionist strategies of learning. The practitioner research paper provides evidence of LIM's contexts of knowing and acting drawing on my professional experiences using coaching and facilitative roles in the educational case study of a strategic management course. More specifically, the case study reflects understanding the captured processes that supported the learning environments such as the analytical process, collective process, reactive process, and emerging learning process. **Practice implications:** The results of the research advance awareness of theories and methods that educational practitioners apply in coaching and supporting learners of strategic management education. It considers the importance of learning interventions by inviting strategic management practitioners to examine how they integrate the theory and practice of organizational change in creating better learning environments. **Originality/value:** This research adds value by providing the benefits of a case study model integrating learning and organizational change approaches that integrate theory and methodologies that guided knowledge creation processes

using the LIM analysis methods. The paper concludes with the suggested practical utility of the LIM approach, as an example of how innovative teaching approaches for educational practitioners of strategic management education can be constructed. Future research implications of practitioner research models are encouraged.

Keywords

Coaching and Facilitator Role, Learning Intervention Model, Organizational Change and Learning, Professional Development, Strategic Management, Strategy as Multiple Design Lens

1. Introduction

Strategic management education is vital for preparing professionals for real work involvement. This paper reviews the essential component theories of strategic thinking and how they influence strategic management educators and researchers to create knowledge useful in professional contexts. I am limiting my focus in two ways. First, I will review theoretical literature approaches connected with strategic management perspectives underpinned by varieties of the school of thinking or paradigms from which various scholars, researchers, and practitioners draw their knowledge creation basis. I will not discuss how strategic management education is implemented in all contexts, but will rather provide insights gleaned from a model created from my practitioner-researcher experiences. I have called this approach a learning intervention model (LIM) from which I explicate ways it contributed to knowledge creation for learners in strategic management education. My second limitation is that I will emphasize learning intervention as one of the many approaches often ignored in teaching strategic management education. Practitioners or researchers may further explore related learning approaches that explore other types of intervention methods.

The review draws from strategic management's multiple schools of thought, while my methodological thinking focuses on my teaching experiences drawn from adult learning theories and behavioral science approaches. Gummesson (2000) suggested that the role of management action scientists as art that develop interventions that lead to specific decisions, implementation, and change processes resulting in local theory tested and modified through action (p. 208). The findings of Brophy (2004) concerning establishing a learning community, also confirm that students learn better when provided with: 1) opportunities to develop knowledge, skills, and values; 2) learning occurring within a shared community; 3) focus on individual and collaborative learning goals (p. 27). The above theoretical perspectives provided inspiration and guidance as a contribution to the study.

1.1. Background of the Study

The expansion of business training schools in Switzerland and worldwide has led to the increasing demand to incorporate strategic management courses designed to prepare learners with relevant problem-solving skills in consulting and management in the business world. Therefore, educators are challenged to design strategic management coursework that connects learners with the theory and practice of the field. The strategic management processes focus on descriptive methods where managers take center roles in planning and implementing strategies that lead to competitive business advantages. However, student learners attending strategic management courses are young professionals and most often with limited prior work experience in strategic management practice. Exploring how strategic management educators are responding to these challenges becomes a critical consideration in coaching and facilitating an effective learning environment for future business students. Several opportunities remain to be explored for developing business students with strategic management learning skills. For example, Sloan (2006) suggests three kinds of critical reflection enabling learners to think strategically 1) content reflection which focuses on what, description or content of a strategic problem; 2) process reflection which focuses on how involving thinking processes used to implement strategic solutions; 3) premise reflection which focuses on why, and position inquiries on why this the issue is relevant to the strategy (p. 154).

Therefore, this paper examines a strategic management educational program, paying special attention to practicing critical reflection on the learning activities, interventions, and organizational changes conceptualized in developing such a program. Fox et al. (2007) note the importance of practitioners thinking critically about their practice as four intersecting components: 1) propositional knowledge: underlying theoretical content concerns and basis of practice; 2) process knowledge: the processes in which professionals engage whilst practicing; 3) personal knowledge: self-knowledge; 4) value-based knowledge: moral and ethical values and beliefs one holds (p. 28). Based on the above considerations, the coaching teaching approach in strategic management educational practice using the LIM approach was designed and its practical significance is discussed below.

1.2. Practical Research Significance of the Study

This article helps to inspire future practitioner researchers in the role of educational coaches and facilitators to develop new models drawn from possibilities of using multiple perspectives of strategic management foundations. This article also contributes new knowledge centered on innovative intervention learning to inspire educational practitioners interested in designing strategic design learning models that synthesize theory and practice strategies as useful for improving strategic management learning in higher education. The LIM perspective advanced in this article is evidence from this research that designing strategic management learning environments is a multifaceted approach that requires the

integration of different types of theories, contextual methods, and professional knowledge skills. Strategic management education and learning will be more illuminating and innovative when academics and researchers demonstrate the integration of the theory, practice, and actions as evidence of how learning interventions were applied that demonstrate reflexive knowledge created within the practice.

1.3. Paper Outline

The focus of the paper is introduced which also includes the background of the study and practical research significance of the study in using the LIM approach. The remainder of the paper is structured as follows: Section 2 presents the literature review of strategic management and conceptualizations drawn from ten multiple schools of thought influencing strategic management education. Section 3 presents the methodological approach used with details of the theoretical and practical foundations of the learning intervention model and how it was applied in the case study of the business educational contexts including identified learning outcomes. Section 4 discusses the LIM framework with implications for identified processes and methods that shaped the study while Section 5 provides the critical reflection analysis which includes a discussion of the LIM application based on the case story of the business school contexts. Section 6 presents the conclusion of the paper including a summary of the practical significance of the applied model, while Section 7 outlines future research implications, and also cites some limitations of the study.

2. Literature Review

The use of case studies as a way of teaching strategic management has been used by academic practitioners and researchers. These case inquiries make it possible for professionals and students to gain a better understanding of the strategic management field. This review provides a background of strategic management education and learning from varieties of approaches. Although strategic management concepts and concerns are built around assessing business strategy, it also needs to be understood from the assumptions of multiple schools of thought (Mintzberg et al., 2009) that influence its practice. Rothaermel (2013) outlines strategic management as a field that integrates analysis, formulation, and implementation toward achieving competitive advantages for companies. Drawing from the above types of analysis the three strategic management tasks focus on analyzing, formulating, and implementing (p. 20).

Moreover, analyzing the firm from the above framework appears to be an injection of simple formulas. However, the complexities of business issues reveal that strategic management cannot be understood from simple and quick formulas. For the most part, the rational and linear approaches associated with strategic management learning and practice have populated management literature perspectives on what is viewed as an ideal version of strategic success. Maranville

(2011) notes that most management scholars and practitioners have advanced a rational approach to the practice of management which is influenced by the objective and procedural epistemology of the scientific method. (Manning, 2017) views strategy practice from the scientific procedural approach guided by what he calls eight critical strategy practices that examine: 1) growth leadership; 2) fast learning and adaptation; 3) focus, value, and cost; 4) business model innovation; 5) resource and capability acquisition, development, and leverage; 6) stakeholder alignment and support; 7) smart sequencing & pacing; 8) disciplined execution. The above assumptions associate strategic management success as generic knowledge applicable to all companies universally. What is taken for granted in the above assumptions is the thinking that core eight management practices apply universally to all companies.

Conceptual Framework: Foundations of Strategic Management

Mintzberg et al. (2009) argue against the view of strategic management as precise measurements and suggest the strategy is better understood from ten multiple perspectives such as 1) The design school: strategy formation as a process of conception; 2) The planning school: strategy formation as a formal process; 3) The positioning school: strategy as an analytical process; 4) The entrepreneurial school: strategy as a visionary process; 5) The cognitive school: strategy formation as a mental process; 6) The learning school: strategy formation as an emergent process; 7) The power school: strategy formation as a process of negotiation; 8) The cultural school: strategy formation as a collective process; 9) The environmental school: strategy formation as a reactive process; 10) The configuration school: strategy formation as a process of transformation. (p. 5). Another approach (Hafsi & Thomas, 2005) argues that the field of strategy and strategy research is better understood within the theory and practice synergies, rather than from theory and practice separation. The authors conceptualize strategy learning and research as a theory of action integrating management processes and decision-making outcomes of engaging the environment, maintaining competitive advantage, preserving guiding track, and prioritizing organizational community values and leadership values and vision (p. 516). Another foundational perspective is that strategies for studying organizations must apply what Thompson (2005) termed domains of organized action which includes analysis of environments, task environments, acquisition of power, and management of interdependence to improve competitive and cooperative strategies (p. 25).

Firstly, in examining the above multiple perspectives of studying strategic management, it can be seen that literature draws from these driving perspectives and paradigms. Secondly, managers also draw from this strategic approach and attempt to implement their strategy formation using one or more of the above perspectives. Thirdly strategic management educators are also influenced by the above schools of thought in terms of how they design and teach strategic management courses in business schools. Overall, it can be seen that the evolution

and essence of strategic management definitions, processes, and practices are to be understood from the foundational perspectives as outlined above. Therefore, a term I use here is that strategic management education is a tunic of many colors because it comprises multiple paradigms and schools of thought. How strategy development in organizations and businesses is designed and implemented is understood when interpreted from one or integrated influences of the above schools of thought. For example (McKeown, 2020), drawing from the configuration school suggests strategy impact is best implemented from continual, creative, and adaptive processes of action.

Another example of using a managing strategic change (Johnson, 1992) suggests strategy developments from an incremental perspective where managers or executives use their schemas based on past decisions made as a basis for engaging future strategies (p. 28). Johnson also proposes a cultural perspective as a means to develop a strategy examined in cultural, political, and cognitive terms. As noted by Johnson, the cultural perspective challenges the complexities and limitations of managers' knowledge creation associated with logical systems analysis and planning. Moreover, the cultural perspective broadens and exposes managers' core beliefs and assumptions informed by the paradigm of the organizations they represent (p. 30). A paradigm is defined as a core set of beliefs and assumptions which fashion an organization's view of itself and its environment. Central to the cultural perspective strategy development integrates analysis of opportunities and threats, strengths and weaknesses, informed by paradigm assumptions, strategy implementation, and performance outputs (p. 30). Johnson also notes that the cultural audits of managers are their ability to analyze and interpret the cultural web of an organization which integrates symbolisms, stories and myths, rituals and routines, control systems, organizational structures, and power structures (p. 31). Johnson has argued that a strategic management approach from a cultural perspective is capable to expose the cultural, social, and political processes in comparison to the logical increment perspective. While a cultural perspective (Johnson, 1992) uses a paradigm awareness to analyze and interpret the cultural web of an organization, it differs from Manning's strategy practices which draw from the design and planning schools of thought.

On the contrary, strategy management research (Mintzberg & Waters, 1985) explores complexities and a variety of strategy formation processes as outcomes of either deliberate or emergent strategy actions. While the deliberate focus is on direction and control actions, emergent strategy patterns focus on strategic learning and venturing. Description types of strategies deliberate or emergent are outlined as planned, entrepreneurial, ideological, umbrella, process, unconnected, consensus, and imposed. It is important to note here that strategic management scholars and researchers continue to debate these perspectives of strategy either as shaped by deliberate or emergent knowledge creation approaches. Moreover, it can be argued that proponents of deliberate approaches draw their assumptions from the planning schools of strategic planning and strategic visioning. On

the contrary emergent, approaches draw from the learning school and environmental school. Another strategic management research (Sun, 2011) used a case study to improve the efficiency of the Singapore Hotel Industry to address its past and new challenges. Taking the position school, the strategy as an analytical process was performed using a SWOT analysis by identifying the external and internal business environment which resulted in identifying the hotel's core competencies, corporate strategies, and future innovation and sustainability plans. Moreover, this case study also shares a similarity of strategy development using a cultural perspective (Johnson, 1992) which also employed SWOT to analyze the threats and opportunities impacting environmental forces, and strengths and weaknesses to assess the organizational capabilities. However, the strategic management of the Hotel case also shows the application of 1) the configuration school to improve and transform the corporate culture of the Hotel; 2) the learning school to design emerging and future innovations and growth of the hotel (Sun, 2011: pp. 271-272). The above case example demonstrates that strategic management educators, change agents and consultants need to reflect their knowledge creation foundations influencing their ideas used to design appropriate strategic management interventions. These outlined schools of thought (Mintzberg et al., 2009) reveal diverse background approaches towards which strategic management intervention approaches are viewed as deliberate or planned approaches depicting strategic knowledge creation as tangible positions, in contrast to emergent approaches which view strategy as broad perspectives.

Given the above diverse approaches, it can be concluded that strategic change consultants, change managers, management educators, and researchers draw their knowledge building from one or more combinations of the above backgrounds to build their practice. These include both the traditional and newer models of strategic management schools of thought. In the next section, I shall discuss the LIM approach, and its methodological and intervention methods that I contributed in coaching learners in a strategic management program.

3. Methodology

The learning intervention model used in this study was designed as a method to improve educational learning using coaching and facilitation as a case study in strategic management education in a Switzerland business school context. In reflection on my professional journey, I asked the following question: How could I design a learning intervention that promotes discovery and innovation in a strategic management course? The learning intervention model (LIM) was used to interpret the contextual data and the learning methods applied. Drawing from the qualitative case study method (Creswell, 2013) I used literature as outlined above to highlight the learning behavior science theory and method (Argyris, 1971) applied to analyze actions in organizational change interventions and knowledge outcomes of the LIM approach. According to Cummings and Worley (2009), organizational development intervention applies to implementing changes in

strategy, structures, and processes of organizational systems. It is important to emphasize that the methodological design adopted in this study is not presented as a magic formula. My interest in this type of intervention emerged during my two years of teaching strategic management students when I realized the limitations of teaching students only theories of strategic management. It was also important to teach them strategic management analysis and diagnostic intervention tactics as practiced by strategic managers and consultants in real work life.

3.1. Instructional Design: Learning Intervention Model

The purpose of this learning intervention project was to find an approach to teaching strategic management modules that enabled learners to act as problem solvers in the process of their studies. This enabled them to learn how to apply the theory and strategic intervention in practice. The study is significant because it provides actionable knowledge produced in professional contexts by practitioners (Argyris, 1993). Consequently, this study may help professional academics and educators to design learning communities and methods that prepare students to gain some insights into the use of strategic management tools and techniques. In so doing the study also builds on existing models and research as analysis and diagnostic intervention approaches that could be used in coaching strategic management learners in business schools. Stacey (2011) notes that thinking about strategy and organizational change includes tasks of examining patterns of interaction and interconnection of responsive processes of communicating between human bodies. He argues that strategic change managers or management consultants try to enact changes from objective observers or participative inquiries (p. 31). Considerations of using the LIM methodological approach prioritized the participative inquiry in which I sought to advance strategic management knowledge created from highlighted sensibilities of 1) the analytical process of the position school; 2) the collective process of the cultural school; 3) reactive process of the environmental school; 4) emerging process of the learning school. The relevance of the above four processes and implications for developing a LIM in educational practice are further outlined in the discussion sections of the study.

3.2. Theoretical Underpinnings of LIM

LIM draws from various theories. Firstly, it draws from a coaching method. The coaching theory was used for this study because it provides professionals to act as coaches, offering advice and guidance (London & Diamante, 2018) to improve the strategic management skills of learners. A theory of strategy development using a cultural perspective also shades understanding of managing strategic change, integrating strategy, culture, and actions (Johnson, 1992). Another perspective of the strategic management change approach (Whittington, 2006; Balogun & Hailey, 2004) explores the relationship between praxis, practices, and practitioners as an integrative framework to illuminate what managers do.

Therefore, the aim of the practice perspective is its contribution to the knowledge-building of strategy practitioners in different contexts (p. 627). Secondly, the LIM draws from organizational consultation in school systems (Jerrell & Jerrell, 1981) where the emphasis is placed on creating learning and organizational changes that improve program enhancement using classroom-planned and implemented activities. Thirdly it draws from pedagogical theories of learning where the emphasis is placed on educators creating strategies for conducting classroom research aimed at improving student learning and development (Brookfield, 1986; Brophy, 2004). Finally, it draws from the work of Maranville (2011) who argued that the strategic thinking process emerges from integrating the science and art paradigms processes created through analysis and synthesis of management education.

3.3. LIM Practice in a Strategic Management Educational Context

While educational contexts will differ, the learning methods can also be adapted to meet various business training specializations. Since the Switzerland Business School specialized in hospitality education, the LIM was designed and tailored toward providing a strategic approach to analyzing and evaluating strategic management planning to improve hospitality organizational effectiveness. This approach draws similarities with the coalignment model underpinning strategic management in the hospitality industry including understanding the relationship between environmental events, strategy choice, firm strategy, and firm performance in the hospitality industry (Olsen et al., 2008). Taking the strategy as practice, the argument presented in the above model requires managers to diagnose and evaluate improvements contained within the coalignment model. Whittington (2006) also suggested that a practice perspective is an integrated approach that enables managers to analyze and evaluate units in both the intra-organizational and extra-organizational domains also referred to as strategy practice research highlighting the importance of evaluating praxis in terms of understanding prevailing practices (p.621). It is also important to note that the evaluation of effective praxis is developed from identified strategic management outcomes.

3.4. Strategic Management: Characteristics of Learning Intervention Outcomes

The learning intervention outcomes were outlined as enabling learners to learn to think strategically (Sloan, 2006). Sloan noted that strategic thinking requires different types of learning methods in strategies such as situation learning, trans-situation learning, learning to learn, and transcendent learning (p. 83). The learning intervention model to strategic analysis reflects the above types of learning as activity learning, indeed what is commonly referred to as learning by doing. It is a practice-based approach in that it provides students of strategic management a taste of real life of what managers and consultants do as problem solvers. Most college-level students have limited managerial background know-

ledge in hospitality companies and real-life strategic decision experiences. However, most students would have participated in internship situations so the LIM approach made sense to them based on their previous internship experiences. The LIM approach enabled learners to experience strategic management as doing or practice by 1) providing opportunities to understand the challenges and opportunities of hospitality industries and suggested strategies for problem improvement; 2) developing assessment and diagnostic skills in analyzing internal and external hospitality industry companies; 3) assumed the role of managers or consultants rather than just learning about strategic management theories; 4) experienced working in teams with other learners and gained insights into the world of managers and consultants; 5) enabled critical reflection in bridging the theory and practice of strategic management in real life situations.

It is important to emphasize that the LIM projects were participated by only BA program students of the strategic management classes who were fourth-semester finalists. From the start of the strategic management classes, the learners were introduced to strategic management theories and the LIM method. In this respect coaching the students as interventionist learners in strategic management, and practice provided timely preparation before the trainees launched into their professional careers within the hospitality industry. Harrison & Enz (2005) outline understanding the hospitality industry as the need to assess the external and internal environments that impact hospitality business contexts. Using the LIM practice two learning praxis methods were developed by the author which were used to assess and guide the learners towards the praxis and practice sensibilities of strategic management practice as outlined below.

3.4.1. LIM 1 Assignment Presentations

This assignment was designed as a presentation where learners worked together in small group formats which focused on presentations of their learning projects. The purpose of the presentation required learners to diagnose and evaluate the external environment and internal impacts of a hospitality industry organization's business and management issues and identify the strategic choices suited to the business or organization context. The task was not just about describing strategic management theories, but the integration of theory and practice to demonstrate confidence use of strategic techniques. The task is justified through strategic management literature and the interventions proposed. The learners were encouraged to demonstrate critical and creative use of strategic theories to demonstrate how organizations within the hospitality and events industry were improved. The proposed structure of presentation guidelines recommended the need to outline: 1) the background of the chosen organization with clarity on challenges, and problems in need of improvement; 2) evaluation of the external and internal environment of the organization and choice of strategies adopted; 3) analysis of the problem, models outlined for improving goals; 4) proposed strategies illustrating types of change processes applied to demonstrate confident

use of strategic techniques; 5) critical and creative use of strategy theory and practice outcomes leading towards clarity how diagnosis and management change was facilitated.

3.4.2. LIM 2 Assignment Report

The LIM 2 assignment was designed as an individual report where learners were required to write a case report on the proposed intervention and illustrate the organization's implementation of its chosen strategy. The report required analysis and evaluation of the strategy suitability given the competitive environment of the hospitality industry challenges. The report also needed to address the consequential implications of change that occur as the strategy is implemented and suggest how organizations manage these changes. The report sought to assess management learning as a reflection in action (Schön, 1983). It also sought to expand learners' abilities to review how they employed strategic management theories, while also reflecting on their roles employed either as external consultants, internal change agents' roles, or managers.

Overall, it is important to underscore that the effectiveness of the LIM method included multiple activities such as workshops, role-playing, working in small groups, case studies, class discussions, formative and summative evaluation, and critical reflection of individual and group presentation reports. Tutorial sessions were contextualized towards learners' focused areas of interest. This diversity reflected multiple areas of learners' career development in hospitality-related areas of interest. These were student-led to allow collaborative learning and independent thought on topics covered in strategic management as a practice. Latorre-Medina and Blanco-Encomienda (2013: p. 272) emphasized, to support strategic systems intervention practice requires coaching learners with skills in design processes, development, and monitoring actions taken.

4. Discussion of LIM Framework in Strategic Management Class

The case study was guided by the following research focus: 'Designing learning intervention experiences that promote discovery and innovation in a strategic management course. This section addresses this focus in particular with emphasis on how learning, discovery, and innovations emerge in facilitating the professional development of learners in strategic management education. The origins of the research study and methods used were presented in the background of studying and an attempt to understand ten schools of thought shaping strategic management education and practice (Mintzberg et al., 2009). In this discussion section, the findings and analysis highlight the knowledge creation impacts referred to as themes analysis of LIM, which includes analytical process, collective process, reactive process, and emerging process identified from the multiple tunic colors of strategic management schools of thought. The processes were identified as relevant in clarifying complexities and insightful learning to

students and facilitative coaches as collaborative efforts that integrated LIM knowledge creation drawing from propositional knowledge, process knowledge, personal knowledge, and value-based knowledge (Fox et al., 2007). The LIM process empowers educators to design strategic management modules that encourage discovery and innovation in improving student and adult learning.

Most recent conceptualizations of strategic management learning have shifted from the emphasis on strategy as long-term planning of goals towards the emphasis on strategy practice as praxis, practices, and practitioners (Whittington, 2006; Maranville, 2011). As also argued by Eraut (1985) professional educators have primary responsibilities towards developing learning environments that identify: 1) types of professional knowledge and impact of contexts of use; 2) related problems of knowledge creation and facilitation of knowledge creation (p. 118). Therefore, the discussion of the LIM framework is also discussed from the above motivations. Using the above guidelines my role was to guide and support the learners' developmental processes, and to facilitate understanding of the importance of intervention activity in organizational cliental contexts and systems of the hospitality domains of knowledge creation. The coaching advice rendered was not meant to give them absolute perspectives on strategic management interventions. The intervention activities and methods recommended sought to promote collaborative problem-solving created within the small group settings using educational and training activities and approaches towards facilitating strategic analysis and change as outlined in the methodology section. Consistent with case study design (Creswell, 2013) the description of the case highlights some identified themes or issues as challenges and prospects of professional knowledge that emerged from studying the case.

4.1. Analytical Process

Firstly, the LIM approach integrating the analytical process creates opportunities for learners to develop skills consistent with strategic management change agents or managers' ability to diagnose the external and internal assessment of business issues. Consequently, and as already stated the LIM enabled learners to build process knowledge by developing skills to analyze environmental forces and organizational capabilities. The role of process knowledge or process strategy is vital in understanding business systems and assessing and evaluating practices to improve alternative structures or revive old structures. Despite the prospects of the analytical process, the challenge encountered by learners was their inability to analyze the political processes which are also essential for understanding strategic management practices and only understood from the real world of managers.

4.2. Collective Process

Secondly, the LIM approach enabled learners to study and analyze organizational cultures which are also defined as collective cognition or cultural web in terms

of understanding shared beliefs, stories, symbolisms, rituals, and routines impacting organizational structures (Johnson, 1992) in the hospitality industry. By studying and analyzing collective interrelated systems of the cultural web processes, the learners were able to diagnose power structures, organizational structures, and communication structures of the hospitality industry. The role of propositional knowledge enabled learners to critically examine the theory and practice of studying collective processes that impacted organizational culture systems of the hospitality industry trends and dynamics. Moreover, due to the limited time, the learners had spent in professional hospitality environments, it was a challenge for learners to interpret the collective cultural web power systems in terms of how managers intervened or created knowledge within these systems. The role of management information systems in the hospitality industry (Olsen et al., 2008) demonstrates the strengths of managing operating systems, planning, and control, environmental scanning, evaluation of strategy, and human performance. However, managers as analysts and interpreters of cultural web systems were less examined. This was due to the limitations of learners as cultural and political analysts. As noted by (Johnson, 1992: p. 30), the role of culture audits by managers is undertaken by managers to allow them to discover the nature of their organization in cultural terms.

4.3. Reactive Process

Thirdly, the LIM approach enabled learners to study and examine strategic management learning as a rich description of environmental domain types. In this regard the learners' presentations and reports depicted an understanding that strategies originate in the environmental analysis, especially using the SWOT analysis which the learners found easier to apply and refer to. Moreover, the learners experienced challenges in going deeper into scanning the business environment. As noted by (Olsen et al., 2008), the goal of any environment scanning process is to identify the key forces driving change within the contextual environment of the organization (p. 91). While the learners' presentations and reports demonstrated multiple examples of contextual environment events in the hospitality industry, the learners were not competent to design competitive methods that demonstrated the implementation of strategic short-term and long-term impacts of adopted strategies. Moreover, for the LIM projects, it was important for learners to select appropriate strategies that they thought suited their presentation or report projects, but also justify why selected strategies suited their projects. Mintzberg and Waters (1985) outlined different types of strategies such as planned, entrepreneurial, ideological, umbrella, process, unconnected, consensus, and imposed, and implications for strategic management at business and organizational levels (p. 270). Since the learners were taught varieties of strategic theories and models, they were able to make recommendations of the various selected strategies and justify how and why they applied them to their projects. Therefore, in these levels, the LIM case demonstrated that the reflection value-based know-

ledge of learners emerged from judgments about the strategies selected. The learners' value-based knowledge was seen as their intentions in selected strategies and justification in the confident use of strategic techniques.

4.4. Emerging Learning Process

Fourthly, the LIM approach contributed to various dialogues, discussions, and complexities that emerged during the strategic management learning sessions. A variety of learning scenarios were employed during the learning sessions. Taking the role of a coach and tutor, I designed the outlined activities as indicated below which illustrated emerging processes of learning. Learners were asked to imagine taking the roles such as external or internal consultants or managers as problem solvers, working in small groups, and sharing action learning interventions with the whole class during their tutorial sessions inclusive of formative and summative sessions. These types of activity-based learning combined with action-driven methods focused on developing the educational learning process as an experience of practice, which allows learners to work in groups and act as problem solvers in selected analyses of the contexts of their intervention projects. Moreover, action-driven methods take different forms. However, I shall only discuss the three action-driven methods that contributed insights into this praxis case and their implications for the learners' development. The case study captured the implementation of three methods such as action learning (AL); problem-based learning (PBL); and action research (AR).

4.4.1. Action Learning (AL)

AL has become a commonly used method of teaching concepts of learning to students of business and management. While the AL methods differ the basic principle of learning skills focuses on the actions of learning sets to engage 1) action on the problem in the company; 2) learning from the experience of action; 3) reflection as a group and individually; 4) reframing revised ideas from plans implemented (Pedler, 2008). Using the LIM framework, the action learning interventionist the learners worked in small groups to identify and diagnose problem issues in the hospitality business areas of domains using the above learning cycles. Working from the AL model, the learners also analyzed internal and external factors affecting the hospitality industry, taking roles as team consultants or acting managers in business contexts. The proposed new solutions from learners reflected actions taken which is consistent with the assumption underpinning AL and experiential learning where learning emerges from some types of actions taken.

4.4.2. Problem-Based Learning (PBL)

A similar method to AL is problem-based learning which is based on the assumption that effective learning occurs when learners are involved with problem issues to be solved. They act as problem solvers instead of relying on teachers for answers or easily made solutions. An example of PBL was advocated by Schön

(1983) who proposed that managers learn through conversations about the situation. Schön termed this process as reflection-in-action within organizational learning systems and suggested the role of the manager as an interpreter of business contexts to understand the behavior of the market, organizational problems, and the learning system of product development (p. 243). Using a problem-based learning method enabled the learners to diagnose and interpret internal and external factors relevant to the analysis of hospitality business issues.

4.4.3. Action Research (AR)

Another action-driven methodology known as action research integrates processes of diagnosis, feedback, discussion, and actions taken in improving organizational and business problems (Burke, 2002). Using the LIM framework, the action research learners engaged in 1) identifying problems in the hospitality industry; 2) analyzing the internal and external environments; 3) proposing and recommending changes to be implemented. For example, using action research intervention the learners were able to diagnose change interventions in various business levels of their hospitality projects. As argued by (Olsen et al., 2008) strategic management in the hospitality industry requires learners to understand the challenges facing hospitality managers. Critical to the above is the view of the manager as adding value between the firm and the business environment (p. 19). Another tool used to develop learners' diagnostic analysis and business evaluation of the hospitality trends was drawn from perspectives of strategic management using Porter's five forces (Porter, 2004) to analyze industry competitors, potential entrants, buyers, and suppliers (p. 4).

As illustrated from the above interactions' multiple varieties of processes and methods were employed in the emergent processes of the LIM interventions which impacted learners in two primary ways. First, it enabled learners to learn to think strategically by practicing reflection in three kinds of critical reflection: 1) content reflection which clarified what they did within their learning activities 2) process reflection which examined how they engaged their reports and collective group work and types of the strategic solution suggested; 3) premise reflection which justified why certain strategies were adopted in their conceptualized individual and collective interventionist projects (Sloan, 2006: p. 154). Secondly, learners created new knowledge through activity theory and interactivity with others, consistent with Engeström's (2001) case for expansive learning at work when professionals engage with problem-solving in workplace settings. Thirdly, learners gained the skills of working in collaborative teams and designing solutions to problems which enabled them to diagnose business challenges and opportunities in hospitality education. One approach by Olsen et al. (2008) suggested the need to understand the environmental scanning in the hospitality business as the ability to apply strategic management processes for identifying forces driving change and selection of competitive methods (p. 91).

Despite the above successes, there were also challenges associated with apply-

ing the outlined action-driven methods of the LIM intervention. First of all, it requires the need to move from teacher or lecturer roles into coaching. Taking the coaching role, I supported the group members in managing their actions and learning processes. Moreover, the coach role demands a lot and it requires tutor availability to transfer knowledge to learner's face to face rather than using lecturer modes of delivery. However, some learners influenced by their cultural-educational background perspectives, detest group work projects and prefer the lecturer's style of delivery. Secondly, a learner's ability to succeed in small group learning requires the full participation of all participants. Some learners participate less in small group learning sessions. Moreover, given the coach and learner's reflective awareness of the above problems the action-driven methods such as AL; AR, and PBL integrated within the LIM framework enriched the learners and learning environment in a strategic management class context.

5. Critical Reflection Analysis: Benefits of Using the LIM Approach

Educational practitioners need to be critical reflectors of the theories and methods they apply in practice. As illustrated from the above examples the success of the case story reflects the emerging process of learning strategic management and demonstrates varieties of interactive tools employed in coaching learners such as group discussions, case analysis, theory and practice reflections by learners, use of role plays either as consultants or managers in problem-solving. The benefits are further outlined below.

5.1. Learners Interactivity

Reflecting on the above dynamics several observations were drawn. The strategy of using the LIM approach was to understand how learners interact with one another and also with the tutor using the outlined learning methods. Drawing from Thompson and Strickland (2003), the aim was to support learners' skills in thinking strategically about a company and its business position. Thompson and Strickland (2003) suggest the importance of strategic management educators as knowledge creators that enable learners to develop managerial judgment skills that create results-oriented action plans. This correlates with the understanding of strategy as practice in work environments. Drawing from the LIM approach, learners benefited a lot from using the above varieties of learning activities and tools. However, there are limitations in the qualitative study using the LIM approach in all school contexts. The recommendations based on the model will require validation in other settings. Future research possibilities are encouraged that reflect different contexts of learners and demonstrate diverse intervention methods applied.

5.2. LIM Management Learning

Using my knowledge and previous experiences in coaching groups and teams I

supported learners with ways they could foster collaborative synergies by using learners' diverse personalities and cultural differences as strengths rather than as weaknesses. While the LIM enriches learning communities, it must be emphasized also that it takes much effort to cultivate such a learning environment. It requires tutor availability both at individual and collective levels of supporting learners. This can be very demanding especially when tutoring responsibilities require managing larger classrooms and culturally diverse groups of learners. The challenges of managing larger classrooms became easier when learners worked in small groups, while also learning to manage their culturally diverse skills. This requires greater levels of attentiveness in designing learning intervention praxis that is culturally sensitive to different learning styles of learners. These contextual findings illustrated that the development of learners and implementation of organizational changes in the context of strategic management education required multiple sensibilities. Eraut (1985) suggests that enhancing the knowledge creation of individuals and professional communities in higher education requires clarification of types of professional knowledge, application of that knowledge, and context use of the kind of learning that emerges (p. 118).

Therefore, the outcomes of this study confirm similar findings based on previous research. Firstly, the study concurs with research on engaging and managing educational change using continuous improvement methods as expressions of four commitments: 1) grounding improvements efforts in local problems or needs; 2) empowering practitioners to take an active role in research and improvement; 3) engaging in iteration, which involves a cyclical process of action, assessment, reflection, and adjustment; 4) striving to promote change across schools, not just individual classrooms (Yurkofsky et al., 2020: p. 404). Secondly, the study also confirms the concept of strategizing research (Balogun et al., 2003) argued as the value that practitioner research draws from learning that emerges from collaborated knowledge created from interactive discussion groups, self-report methods, and practitioner research. Thirdly the study findings share similarities with case-based research in strategic management instruction (Maranville, 2011) where student teams are presented with teaching cases for analysis of business or corporate levels strategies. Moreover, Maranville argues that strategic management study approaches are dominated by the scientific paradigm that orients more toward the analysis approach. To integrate the synthesis approach, he proposes student teams use case-based analysis combined with using oil paint to employ creativity as a process to understand the vision of the company. Maranville argues that both analysis and synthesis are critically important tools in strategic thinking. While the artwork experience of learning is admired and illustrated another facet of strategic thinking as emergent, it can also be argued that real-life business situations require acting and thinking fast, rather than posing to paint.

On the contrary, the main emphasis of the LIM approach sought to orient the learners primarily with analysis techniques and the artistry knowledge that

emerged while the learners were involved in the process of diagnosing their business and organizational interventions. Another point of difference was that in the LIM student learners selected real-life companies to diagnose, in contrast to the above model where student teams were assigned business cases for study. Whilst I value the importance of synthesis development in strategic management learning, in my case model the learners demonstrated its illumination in the evidence of how they applied critical and creative use of strategic theories in choices of implemented strategies in their projects. Finally, reflecting on the above prospects, research in strategic educational management suggests developing three key ingredients: systemic strategic thinking, innovative learning processes, and pedagogical leadership (Latorre-Medina & Blanco-Encomienda, 2013).

5.3. Professional Practice Reflections

Inspired by the above motivations I sought to advance these types of practices in coaching learners. Overall, this type of practitioner research method enabled me as a coach and facilitator to reflect on the impact of acting and knowing in domains of professional knowledge in practice (Fox et al., 2007; Schön, 1983). The goal of the LIM approach was a project designed in response to meet the demands of my professional practice which included the challenges and opportunities to act as a learning intervention coach designed to advance intervention learning skills in strategic management education. The experience of creating LIM processes enabled the learners to acquire the knowledge base in the business and strategy analysis of the internal and external environments of the hospitality industry. Therefore, this paper is of benefit to educators and professional consultants by emphasizing a new approach to contribute insights into the future coaching strategies in teaching strategic management learning and practice to business schools.

6. Conclusions

From these findings, this study confirms that strategic management learning and practice draw several theoretical multi-perspectives. Therefore, it is important to further explore how educators and coaches collaborate with educational institutions and learners to enhance learning environments. This paper contributes towards strategic management education in higher education conceptualized from a learning intervention model (LIM) and implications for improving strategic management learning and practice are highlighted.

6.1. Practical Significance

From this paper, some practical significance is outlined on the value of the learning intervention model in designing strategic educational practice of the case study model. This paper has demonstrated the potential to design a strategic management learning and development of learners demonstrating its practical

utility as an outcome of the efforts to sustain the intervention learning model. The practical significant implications are further discussed in the following sections below.

6.1.1. Integration of Theory and Practice

This type of intervention learning suggests that learners learned to think strategically by integrating theory and practice in problem-solving. This was illuminated through discovery and innovation that highlighted learning processes that enhanced the use of critical reflection using content, process, and premise skills as learning interventionists. These are matters that strategic management educators would need to elucidate.

6.1.2. Instructors or Educators as Coaches

The role of the tutor in creating such learning environments requires moving away from being a lecturer to that of a coach and facilitator of designing learning experiences in collaboration with learners. It also requires continuous improvements of learning methods, designing methods that involve learners as active participants in learning rather than passive learners. Despite the challenges learners encountered in coordinating group presentations due to some learners lacking the motivation to participate, the LIM provided learners with active experiences and appreciation of problem-based learning, practice-based learning, and problem-solving skills in strategic management as a practice. Learners adopted fictional roles such as external or internal consultants, and managers. Additionally, these opportunities provided learners with intervention abilities, diverse presentations, and reports that resulted in multiple insights into analyzing real problem issues in strategic management domains of the hospitality industry.

6.1.3. Creating Learning Useful to Praxis and Practice

Strategic management learning and practice represent a tunic of many colors, and consultants, management educators, and researchers can design intervention learning models that are useful to praxis and practice. Moreover, in designing such learning environments educators, management consultants, and researchers need to expand and critique the various schools of thought guiding their pedagogic approaches while being reflexive of challenges and potentials. The case illustrates the potential of LIM which enabled learners to gain personal and collective intervention learning competencies that draw from the outlined action-driven approaches. No single coaching methodology can serve every purpose. Therefore, this study suggests that the ideas outlined in the case example provide multiple perspectives by examining issues of learning challenges and prospects likely to be experienced by strategic management educators in varieties of school business contexts.

6.1.4. Strategic Learning as Knowledge for Action

From my perspective, strategic management learning cannot be fully understood

only from its theoretical propositions. Creative application of learning interventions drawn from varieties of schools of thought on the strategy needed to guide instructional curriculum designs. The four learning intervention processes discussed in the article provided classroom and professional knowledge that emerged while using the LIM approach in coaching learners. Drawing from Finlay (2008) reflective practice emerges from cultivating four areas of concern such as ethical, professional, pedagogic, and conceptual (p.11). Using learning interventions theory and processes to create strategic management courses that link the above concerns offers educators vast learning and research possibilities for improving educational practices. The intervention activities illustrated in the case study may be described as expanding and deepening understanding of strategic management learning as actionable ways of knowing.

6.1.5. Strategic Management as Problem-Solving

The LIM approach described in this study was to prepare learners as better problem solvers using strategic management theories and learning intervention methods. The purpose of the case study was to understand processes and dynamics that enabled the tutor and learners to design strategic management learning environments using the LIM methodology. As already stated, the LIM assignment presentations enabled learners to analyze better the problem-related issues identified within the external and internal organizational analysis of their projects. Moreover, strategic management educational coaches and practitioners may promote different problem-learning skills from alternative angles such as case study analysis or organizational assessment using surveys. The central argument of this paper is that the existing research needs to provide learners with learning intervention skills for understanding strategic managing learning as processes involving the analysis and strategic management of the business industry. As outlined in the article, strategic management education represents multiple colors of foundational theoretical contributions, and future research opportunities await further exploration.

7. Future Research Implications and Limitations

Practitioner research development is widely used by practitioners to examine their practice. Further work needs to address more educational contextual models drawn from the diversity of strategic management schools of thought. Future research could also further examine the role of educators as political entrepreneurs (Greiner & Schein, 1988), as culture, and change agents (Grieves, 2010), and as strategic systemic interventionists (Latorre-Medina & Blanco-Encopmienda, 2013). Finally, research on the specific role of strategic systemic intervention would be of value in creating classroom innovation models that capture creative learning environments while also enhancing problem-solving skills for learners. Further exploration of the above innovative approaches will provide insights to strategic management educators and researchers in understanding how learning inter-

vention opportunities are created and negotiated in higher education.

Given the diverse views around practitioner researcher experiences, the evidence from this research suggests that qualitative case study methodology was useful in capturing research themes and patterns that emerged. Educational practitioners may also use grounded methodology or narrative methodology to be reflexive of their professional practice.

This study has some limitations like any other academic inquiry. The suggested approach advocates the idea of LIM as one of the many possibilities approaches within the broader ten design schools shaping strategic management. While the case illustrated successful outcomes, there are also challenges that would require further inquiries. Firstly, the LIM requires significant commitments from educators to invest enormous time commitments in working with learners using the listening roles of coaches to design such interventions. This requires the need to develop facilitation process skills while also experimenting with learning and organizational change methods used to manage diverse educational practices. From the educational point of view, the processes can achieve productive results when there are collaborative learning opportunities created between educational coaches and learners. This demands significant effort and cooperation needed for such learning interventions to succeed. The case study analyzed demonstrated high motivation from learners who were keen to gain problem-solving skills associated with strategic management practice. However, this required significant time investments by both the educational coach and learners.

The second limitation concerns the challenges of managing learners' educational contexts where the LIM approach is implemented. As reflected in the features of the LIM example diverse group work activities and individual coaching are required. These methods may be challenging and difficult to implement where learners prefer traditional learning approaches that favor lecture-centered approaches. In the illustrated case, orienting the learners toward the value of LIM was seen as the benefits it brought towards a better way to help learners understand strategic management as an integration of theory and practice.

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Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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