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Behavioral Strategy: (Re-) Affirming Foundations

Call for papers for: [Management Research Review](#)

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Background

The milestone work of Powell, Lovallo, and Fox (2011) established the boundaries of a new field of research in management and organization studies: Behavioral Strategy. This new field “merges cognitive and social psychology with strategic management theory and practice” (Powell, 2011; p. 1371). From that, the ‘behavioral revolution,’ based on bounded rationality (Simon, 1947), dominant coalitions (Cyert and March, 1963), the investigation of sociodemographic features of executives (Hambrick and Mason, 1984), and the study of executives’ deviations from rationality (i.e., cognitive biases; Kahneman et al., 2011), is finally gain momentum in strategy research (Greve 2013; Levnithal, 2011). Additionally, behavioral strategy also serves as a good interpretative lens for the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic (Foss, 2020).

Notably, behavioral strategy is aimed at understanding: i) how the cognition of the individual scale up to collective behavior (Lovallo and Sibony, 2010; Gavetti, 2012), ii) how complex judgment in organizations is made (Garg, 2017; Augier et al., 2018), and iii) how designing organizational environments that can reduce the occurrence of biases (Echols and Neck, 1998; Cristofaro, 2017; Sibony et al., 2017). In brief, behavioral strategy deals with the “psychological origins of strategy” and try to advance them as to better exploit the antecedents of strategy – such as personality traits, mental health or disorders, beliefs, spirituality emotions, etc. (e.g., Ackers and Preston, 1997; Mendenhall, Butler, and Ehat, 2014) – and how it is ‘really’ formed in organizations.

However, despite the above outlined good intentions in trying to “bring realistic assumptions about human cognition, emotions, and social behavior to the strategic management of organizations” (Powell et al., 2011; p. 1371), behavioral strategy research has mainly established its foundations on works investigating psychological variables on secondary data (Schumacher et al., 2020; Srivastava et al., 2020). Yet, the required consideration of the emotional side of human mind (Prietzal, 2020) which, for some scholars, is the driver of cognition and consequent behavior (Healey and Hodgkinson, 2018; Cristofaro; 2020), has been lacking.

As such, the goal of this Special Issue is to (re-)affirm the foundations of Behavioral

Strategy as conceived in its origins. In brief, research based on multi-level theories and/or multiple empirical approaches – based on primary data – that take into account the behavior of executives intertwining affective states and cognition are strongly encouraged, so that our collective efforts will advance strategy as an act of human behavior rather than an application of tools.

Aims and Scope

In this Special Issue of Management Research Review, we encourage contributions aimed at answering the following research questions:

- How do individual biases influence the strategic decision making process, or how do individual biases influence collective biases in top management team strategic decision making processes?
- How do biases present at different levels of analysis (macro-, meso-, and micro-) co-evolve?
- Do personality traits, mental disorders, beliefs, spirituality, emotions foster/reduce cognitive biases while making strategic decisions?
- Are there some board of director or top management team compositions and/or features that foster/reduce affect and cognitive biases?
- Can the 'acts' of self-regulating emotions and reducing cognitive biases lead to the formation of other, more dangerous, unconscious biases? Can these 'acts' lead to other more negative strategic consequences?
- How do stakeholders(e.g., external advisors, auditors, investors, media, employees, etc.) influence the strategic decision-making processes by executives?
- How do mixed emotions (positive and negative present at the same time) influence

strategic decision making processes? Does this influence change according to the experience (or other personal features) of the strategists?

- Do different types of emotions lead to similar/dissimilar effects on strategic decision making processes?
- Does the scarcity or the abundance of cues influence strategists' affective states and consequent strategic decisions?
- Do cognition and affective states interplay differently when examining family firms, or startups, or large firms, or hybrid organizations?

Other research inquiries in related domains are welcome to be addressed within this Special Issue. Contributors are encouraged to contact the Editors (see below for the contact information) should there be a question regarding the topic fit.

Submission Process

Submitted papers must conform to the submission guidelines of the Management Research Review (MRR). Manuscripts are due by October 30th, 2021 and must be submitted using the MRR submission system at <https://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/mrr>. Authors should indicate that they would like their document to be considered for the Special Issue "Behavioral Strategy". Authors of papers invited to be revised and resubmitted will be expected to work within a tight timeframe for revisions.

Further information

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For questions about submitting to the Special Issue contact the MRR Publisher, Laura Etchells (letchells@emeraldgroup.com).

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