MULTI-STAKEHOLDER PERSPECTIVE OF STRATEGIC PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT:
A STUDY OF E-LEARNING PROVIDERS IN NON-FORMAL EDUCATION
DOMAIN IN INDIA

Abstract

Multi-stakeholder approaches are being adopted by many progressive organizations for better strategic performance outcomes but when it comes to technology based learning service providers in non-formal education domain, the default focus has been on the student only and learning outcomes are seen as the only drivers for strategic performance objectives. This research is to enquire if businesses operating in non-formal education segment have to visualize the students more as important stakeholders and also if other stakeholders need to be brought into the decision making variables, thereby expanding the scope of business performance from achieving learning outcomes to overall stakeholder expectation management.

The research objective is divided into two parts. The first part of the objective is to establish if specific intervention variables adopted by e-learning providers result into higher strategic performance indicators. The next part of the objective is to assess if meeting stakeholder expectations is directly related to success level of e-learning providers and what expectation perspectives impact the overall meeting of stakeholder expectations.

The literature review has been grouped in three sections – studies related to e-learning, stakeholder theory, and strategic performance management. Based on the literature review, various path-breaking concepts and theoretical frameworks articulated by reputed academicians in the domain of online education, a conceptual framework was developed to test the research hypotheses and find answers to various research questions. The complexity of the subject of study necessitated the division of the overall activity into three phases – an action research to test the hypotheses built around the first part of the objective, an empirical research based on opinion survey of multiple stakeholders to test the hypotheses built around the second part of the objective, and a multiple-case based explanatory or interpretive study to identify all common linkages and patterns of behavior.

The action research segment investigates if responsiveness towards learners affects short-term as well as long-term business performance indicators of the
learning providers. It also assesses if difference in responsiveness between e-learning providers result into corresponding difference in enrollment figures, growth in enrollments, continuity in growth rate of enrollments and also the course and teacher ratings. Finally, it attempts to find linkages between responsiveness, course rating and teacher rating on the one hand and learner satisfaction on the other. The action research segment utilizes various statistical analysis tools like t-test, ANOVA, Chi-Square test, Logistics Regression, etc.

The empirical research segment consists of development of questionnaire for three identified stakeholders of e-learning providers and collects data about the attainment of perspective-specific expectations and the overall meeting of their expectations. The various analyses conducted on this data try to decipher if the attainment level of expectations is a function of success of the e-learning provider by comparing the levels between more successful and less successful e-learning providers. Analyses are also conducted to establish correlations and specific predictor variables to link perspective-specific expectations and attainment of overall expectations of each stakeholder. The empirical research segment utilizes statistical tools like Factor Analysis, Reliability Analysis, Independent Sample t-test, various Non-Parametric tests, Pearson Correlation tests, and Multi-Variate Regression techniques.

The multi-case study segment tracks the online learning delivery business of three organizations over a period of two to five years to identify linkages between various research variables and patterns of relationships while taking into account various qualitative narratives and finds holistic interpretations corroborating the other two research findings.

The synthesis of all the research segments – action research, empirical research and case-study research – was done keeping in mind the research questions that this study wanted to address. The conceptual framework was validated to establish that multiple stakeholder expectations play a vital role in impacting strategic performance management of organizations. The study lists major findings, recommends implementation items and also specifies limitations which need to be kept in mind before expanding the scope of the research in further studies.