

December 2020

Theoretical Perspectives of Strategic Followership

Strategic followership must be investigated because it is an emerging field. Different authors examine it from the macro- or micro-dimensions. Followers can be naïve or revolutionary (Zoogah, 2018).

The three perspectives that guide followers to contribute value to organisations are restorative (Zoogah, 2011), transcendent (Zoogah, 2014; Pina e Cunha, Ergo, Clegg & Neves, 2013) and maintenance (Zoogah, 2014).

Assumptions for interpersonal and interorganisational approaches are Equality, Readiness, Purity of Intentions, and Flatness (Zoogah, 2020)

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Preface

Followership is essential in our business and community as a result of poor leaders. The results of experiments conducted on leadership can minimise the damage resulting from corrupt leaders. The goal of this reference book is to analyse followership in business from a theoretical perspective. The author reviews the perspectives that deal with issues relating to strategic followership. The role of followers, either, as individuals or firms, is focused on strategic value. As we investigate theories that have strategic import, we

discover the strategic role of followers. Consequently, the writer introduces strategic role as he considers the role context, role activity, role process, and role dynamics. He provides insights into the theoretical perspectives regarding the environment, resources, transactions, and outcomes, which correspond to strategic situations, strategic decisions and actions, strategic interactions, and strategic value, respectively. The writer states two purposes for authoring this book. Foremost, he comes out with this book as a follow-up to his first book, in which he discusses

strategic followers. He perceives the significant contributions of followers to businesses. Also, he is happy to lead in the discussion of strategic followership through different theoretical perspectives. These aims show why he underscores the use of emergent and interactive approaches. The book consists of six chapters.

Chapter One: Introduction

In the book, Zoogah introduces readers to the importance, perspectives, assumptions and value of strategic followership. He provides a background to strategic followership. He also presents the theories that are helpful to explore strategic followership. He discusses the strategic role, strategic situations, strategic decisions and actions, strategic interactions and strategic outcomes, and the various theories that underpin them. In his conclusion, he shows the value and levels of strategic followers.

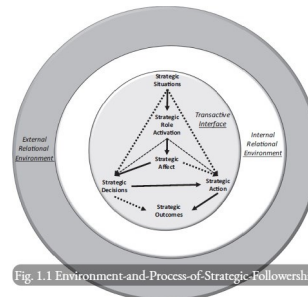


Fig. 1.1 Environment and Process of Strategic Followership

In the diagram, the bold arrows represent the process. The broken arrows present the direct effects that are in conflict with the theory. However, they are checked for the misrepresent-



THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES OF STRATEGIC FOLLOWERSHIP

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tation studied. The conditions in the external and internal environments impact the exchange between the follower and leader. The strategic role played by the follower in this relationship towards the strategic situations is affected by strategic affect. The strategic decisions followers make as a result of strategic affect influence strategic outcomes.



In institutions, strategic followers can be regulators or enforcers.

We have two types of stakeholders, primary and secondary.

Stakeholders should be ethical so that businesses can make higher profits, generate better value for all stakeholders and make the world the best place (Caldwell, Karri, and Vollmar, 2006, p. 208).

Costly signaling can help leaders and followers cooperate as a unit (Gintis, Smith & Bowles, 2001).

Symbolism capital helps strategic followers to relinquish their interest. They are generous in using their resources, including time and energy to contribute to the success of the firm (Bliege-Bird & Smith, 2005; Turner, 1991).

Symbolic capital is significant in restorative and transcendent environments because it enables followers to generate strategic value.

Political theory can be employed to examine transcendent followership. Politicians represent their electorate. They are the source of hope to them, who will be considered leaders. Alternatively, they may hurt them with their actions.



Followers performing a role

Chapter Two: Strategic Role

The role theory reveals that followership is a role (Uhl-Bien, Riggio, Lowe, & Carsten, 2014; Kelley 1992).



The role theory shows

that behaviours are patterned

and associated with social positions governed by expectations and embodied with consequences, to which individuals are socialised (Zoogah, 2018).

A role is “a set of behaviours appropriate for a position that an

What role does followership play in fulfilling the strategic objectives of organisations?

individual fills” (Heller and Van Til, 1982; Hollander, 1974). The roles result in several kinds of followership. Strategy is identifying the ends and means to attain the ends. The ends can be short-term or long-

term, while the means represent tangible and intangible resources (Mintzberg, 1998). Some strategic role contexts focus on the relational environment of strategic followership. They include culture,

routines, institutions, and symbols. Strategic situations emerge from these elements. Strategic role is related to strategic followership through the restorative and transcendent followership

The intraorganisational and interorganisational methods are two ways strategic followership can use to explore strategic role contexts. The micro-macro relational structure of followership can also be used to explain relationships.

dimensions or both. Under restorative followership, followers restore any diminished value as a result of bad leadership behaviours that affect the "reputational, image, relational organisational values and, consequently, contribute to the strategic

objectives of their organisation. Zoogah (2014) defines transcendent followership as the process by which a follower strives to achieve optimal value or extraordinary outcomes despite challenges or

constraints. In transcendent situations, the interpretations focus on the sub-optimality of the good behaviours of the leader and likely behaviours that can generate optimal value for the relational constituents.

Chapter Three: Strategic Situations

A strategic situation presents a dilemma and requires choice (Zoogah, 2014). Situational dynamics presents the structure and progression of leader-follower relationships. Strategic context shows the external and internal environments that



enable the leader and follower to interact.

These environments produce strategic contexts, including strategic leverage, strategic constraint, strategic vulnerability, and strategic problems.

How do strategic situations and their changes influence outcomes of strategic followership?

Zoogah (2108) defines strategic leverage as "a following firm's ability to influence a leading firm to achieve superior outcomes consistent with the fundamental objectives of the constituents in the relationship exchange. Strategic constraints are

the limitations on a firm's business arena or the hurdles a following firm might encounter in the relational exchange. Strategic vulnerability is how susceptible a firm is to business condition or situation that lowers its performance (Jain & Signal, 2014, p. 42).

Strategic problem is the inability of a following firm to achieve desired strategic outcomes due to threats in the relational environment and the weakness of that firm.

Strategic followership aligns itself with only positive outcomes (i.e., good behaviours) of followers.

The theories for strategic situation and dynamics include the game, culture, organisational routines, symbolism, and institutions. The game theory is basic in strategic situations. Strategic situations require strategic moves. The follower makes a decision based on several options, what he already knows and when he/she decides to respond to the leader. In a strategic situation, there are three elements namely the decision-maker (i.e., follower), the strategy sets (i.e., over what he or she is making the decision), and payoffs (how he or she evaluates the different decisions). The strategic followership dynamics

focus on changes in the relationships that affect the value created by a follower. It can also refer to shifts in the decisions and behaviours of relational actors and contexts, which also results in changes in the decisions, behaviours and value creation of followers. The theories that help actors be able to explain strategic, followership dynamics are namely the relational dynamics, social construction, structuration, and social systems. These four theories, according to Zoogah (2018), are

closely related. These theories are applicable at the firm level, but they are possible at the individual level too. The two strategic situations under which a follower operates are good and bad. It is the discretion of the follower to choose which one to react to. Thus, strategic followers enact restorative and transcendent followership roles in bad and good leadership contexts.



Concepts in Strategic situation

Change is the foundation of strategic followership (Zoogah, 2018)





Chapter Four: Strategic Decisions and Actions

- ♣ A follower can use an emergent strategic choice such as delay, excuse, and plea tactics to stop reacting to a bad leader now but will do so later.
- ♣ The best strategic response is manipulation.
- ♣ Strategic followership in multiple strategic alliances or networks manifests in two ways; equity and non-equity networks.
- ♣ Two strategic actions that may induce equity and non-equity networks are lock-out and lock-in behaviours (Gulati, Nohria, & Zaheer, 2000, p. 210).
- ♣ Lock-in or lock-out strategic actions can engender the effectiveness of strategic followership.

Followers make decisions and take actions that generate value for relational constituents. Strategic decisions help followers take strategic actions. Decisions are cognitive elements. Followers chose from among different alternatives as they engage themselves in mental exercise. They engage in this exercise to form a strategy (Mintzberg, Ahlstrand, & Lampel, 1998). The mindsets of individuals and groups affect the activities of businesses ((Mintzberg et

al., 1998). Theories that can be used to explain the strategic decisions are game theory, crisis, strategic choice, information asymmetry, and prospects theory. Strategic actions are behaviours that result in strategic outcomes. The strategic outcomes can be divided into transactional, transformational, and game-theoretic actions. The theoretical perspectives that can help interpret the

strategic role action include macro theories such as network, routine, culture, institutional, resource-based view, stakeholder and agency. Two theories that can be applied to the strategic decisions of followers are Oliver's (1991) strategic response behaviour theory and Child's (1972, 1997) strategic choice theory. The strategic response theory describes how businesses predict the strategic response of firms to the behaviours of

What is the process by which followers decide to (1) restore value diminished as a result of bad leadership or (2) optimize subpar value emerging from good leadership? What actions do followers take?

institutions. The game theory is related to strategic followership decision-making in the sense that the follower and leader are equal because the value they create is the same (Friedman, 1994; Friedman & Sunder, 1994). The choices of every player must be considered when firms are making decisions or selecting a strategy. The theory can be used to

describe the decisions strategic followers make when their relationship with leaders results in a crisis. Oliver (1991) asserts that the examination and types of strategic responses range from active resistance from passive conformity to proactive manipulation. The strategic responses are acquiescence, compromise, avoidance, defiance, and manipulation.

Factors that influence strategic responses are cause, constituents, content, control, context and other insignificant factors. The strategic choice theory is used to explain how followers resolve disputes with bad leaders. Information asymmetry theory shows that the way people and businesses share information has an impact on the

Two or more people who combine forces and work together will achieve more – Stag Hunt game or “assurance game,” “coordination game,” and “trust dilemma.”

decisions, actions and outcomes (Stiglitz 1975, 1977). The prospect theory shows that individuals make decisions by considering the options that are risky and uncertain (e.g., rate of the chance of profits or losses). The theory postulates that people do not enjoy losses,

and because they do not want to make any losses, they are more willing to take risks to avoid it. In some ways, even though the strategic followership and prospects are different, they have some similarities.



An individual who is in a fix, s.he does not know the decision to make.

Chapter Five: Strategic Interactions

Zoogah (2018) defines strategic interaction, "as the transfer of energy between leader and follower where energy refers to the forceful inducement by the follower of the leader where energy refers to the forceful inducement by the follower of the leader." I perceive that the supervisor may use resources at his or her



disposal to force a follower to engage in some acts. Zoogah thinks that in strategic interactions, the

follower dependency rate is brought under to bare because the chief executive officer has all the resources at their disposal. The blend of the follower and leader view on the level of dependency leads to different forms of strategic interactions and influence dynamics. Some interactions

- ◆ Leading and following firms relate with each other due to the level of dependency. An agency exist when a follower who is the agent conducts his or her affairs in an open manner to preserve the relationship with the leader who is the principal.
- ◆ Strategic followers are agents because they exhibit transparent behaviour in trying to achieve their defined purposes.
- ◆ An economic exchange relationship is created when a follower referred to as a seller sells innovative concepts to the leader who is a buyer 'buys' them.
- ◆ The political theory demonstrates that strategic followers can gain value from organisational politics when it promotes the larger interest of the firm.
- ◆ The tournament theory mentions even though tournaments predominantly dwell on individual benefits, it enables strategic followers to waive these benefits in the collective interest of the business.
- ◆ Signaling can help a leader or a follower to showcase his or her qualities when he or she is promoting the business to others.

How do the relational transactions of followers manifest to yield outcomes for constituents in the relational interface?

are symmetric while others are asymmetric. In symmetric interactions, both followers and leaders have equal orientations—interdependence, dependency, and counter dependency. In asymmetric interactions, either one has an inferior or superior orientation towards the interaction.

Strategic followers and leaders can understand these interactions by exploring theories of agency, exchange, political, tournament, and signaling. This view is supported by the resource-dependence theory (Pfeiffer & Salancik, 1978; Hillman, Withers, & Collins, 2009; Oliver, 1991) can be used to explain the

relationship. The political theory intimates that the behaviour of a politician depends on the kind of relationship he/she has developed with the electorate or people in the constituencies (Schuler, Rehbein & Cramer, 2001).

Stakeholder theory

Strategic followership aligns itself with only positive outcomes (i.e., good behaviours) of followers.

according to Freeman (1984), shows that the behaviour of organisations towards stakeholders is determined by its degree of dependence for resources.

Theories of symbolism, routines, and networks also assert that the type of orientation shows how a follower interacts with a leader. Symmetric orientations are likely to lead to meaningful or

flourishing experiences. Asymmetric orientations may not succeed because of the inferiority of superiority of the organisation and or individual during the interaction. Different theories necessary to help strategic followership are strategic cognition, strategic mental models, information theory, and competence

theory. The strategic cognition is vital to strategic followership because they enable us to understand how followers and leaders process knowledge and communicate it among themselves.

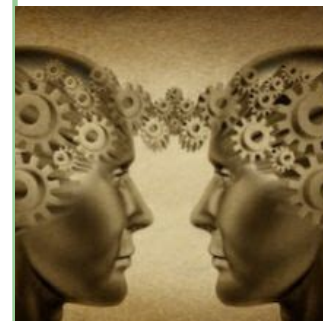


Diagram shows how people interact cognitively.

Chapter Six: Strategic Outcomes



- ♣ Kinds of values are
- ♣ Positive and negative
- ♣ Intrinsic and extrinsic
- ♣ Collective and individual
- ♣ Positive, intrinsic and collective values inspire followers to engage in productive ventures.
- ♣ The strategic value curve, mathematically can be presented as, $SVC = RV + MV + TV$, where $TV > MV > RV$
- ♣ When firms collaborate, they acquire resources, profits, more customers, innovative ideas that increase their effectiveness (Shenkar & Reuer, 2006; Zaheer & Venkatraman, 1994.)



Strategic followership is valuable because of the outcomes it creates. Evidence from the strategic value curve (using the equality and readiness theories) shows that followers are happier as restorative followers than being transcendent. Value as a concept is not easy to define. Any attempt to do so has resulted in it not being well defined or defined through a single perspective using price mechanism or systematised preference rankings, which includes the analysis of indifference (Donaldson & Walsh, 2015, p. 189).

The strategic followers regard followership as a form of exchange and transaction, so they pay attention to positive, intrinsic, and collective values. Strategic value can also be regarded as the exchange value or transaction value analysis because the emphasis is on positive outcomes.

The effectiveness of a firm is a product of strategic outcomes. Performance is one element that can show effectiveness. Strategic followership can achieve strategic outcomes considering factors such as productivity, innovation, learning and advantages. Strategic

followership can be used to explore the four outcomes. In the case of productivity, followers will be productive and help a firm be efficient and effective when they have a positive relationship with their leaders. Followers will improve or approve of the methods that leaders deploy to ensure that the firm is productive (Zoogah, 2014).

Strategic followership is keen on adding value to the business in bad or good leadership situations. They are able to perform restorative and transcendent acts as they exchange ideas with their leaders.

What outcomes do strategic followership yield?

Followers who are performing their roles as individuals or organisations can make an innovation (Bouwen & Fry, 1988). The following firms learn from leading ones. The “latecomer firms” have been in existence for a long time and have all the resources, however, they may not



The collaboration between a following firm and leading firm is critical for businesses to gain innovative advantage. The collaborative structure that links a following firm to a leading firm may drive the two organisations to seek efficiency advantages to structure their

collaborations differently from those that seek innovation advantages.

The level of analysis is critical in examining strategic followership and outcomes. Strategic followership is an emergent and interactive process at the individual and the organisation level. It is a concept that organisational behaviour and human resource management researchers are motivated to study because they are want to understand the

strategic value of every individual worker's behaviours (macro-foundations) and interactive impact (i.e., micro-foundations).

CONCLUSION

The writer discussed the theories on strategic followership at the firm level in the book. It is crucial to explore followership at the firm level because they help the firm in competitive positioning.

A firm can secure its market with its product,

product features and mode of reaching them. Competitive positioning helps firms persevere and outperform their competitors in the market (Porter, 1996) using their assets (Barney, 1991; Wernerfelt, 1984) and capabilities (Mahoney, 1995; Teece, Pisano, &

Shuen, 1992).

Businesses can use their social capital and governance to secure their market.

The author argues that strategic followership is both an asset and a capability (Day, 1994). Assets and capabilities respectively are

Experimental data collected by studies that adopt the micro- and macro- theories recommended in this publication show that firms can draw upon the capabilities of strategic followership to produce greater values than their opponents.

classified resources and skills. Followers deploy their set of skills to use the resources to help their business retain their customers. Studies on micro- and macro-theories show that strategic followership have the complex

bundle of skills to attain higher market size than their contenders.



MY EVALUATION OF THE BOOK

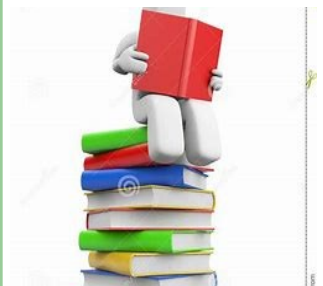
This book is filled with thought-provoking questions to help readers pay attention to the material, think about and understand it. The author has included contemporary examples in the field of business to buttress points he raised in the book and help the reader to experience the concept in reality.

The author acknowledges and welcomes theories from other subject areas, in addition to strategic management. The author repeats most concepts in the book

to lay emphasis on them. Each chapter builds on the preceding one.

Even though Zoogah gives sufficient details to clarify the ideas he presents, he includes a summary of the chapters so that readers can discern the main points. I perceive it to be a good writing technique as it helps readers understand the text and relate to it sufficiently. He teaches the

subject of followership from a strategic view excellently. Another good observation is that he starts each chapter with a question and produce answers. He has included several references and sources for the reader to make further investigations. Some of the references contain links to help you read more about the concept. Everyone should read the book as it seeks to empower us to become strategic followers.



Reference



Zoogah, D. B. (2018). *Strategic Followership: Theoretical Perspectives*. New York, NY: Routledge

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