



Growth Realization through Lateral Integrative Mechanisms

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ABSTRACT

Companies struggle with integrating functions and managing growth. This becomes especially clear during acquisitions and integrations. Company structures are always changing, but they are not always integrating or innovating. A single department with three populations from merged companies may still function the way they used to before the acquisition. Lateral Integrative Mechanisms (LIMs) are presented in this article as the bridges between functions and factions in a multi-national corporation. The tactical advantages of these technical mechanisms are labelled and described in terms of their functionality. A theory is developed as described by propositions which emerged in the case that describe the need and the attributes of LIMs for success in a global enterprise. These structural interfaces act as mechanisms that have significant potential to help a decentralized organizational structure grow and enact strategy in a competitive technical landscape.

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Introduction

LIMs (LIMs) are critical for the success of an organization (Persson, 2006). LIMs help connect the dimensions of a designed organizational structure and influence how the elements of the structure interface with each other and the corporate center (Baden-Fuller & Haefliger, 2013; Foss & Saebi, 2017). These LIMs are complex, situational, and continuously dynamic, and by design provide agility (Hoogervorst, 2004). This study attempts to provide research information about the nature of LIMs, how they are constructed, and how they influence growth synergy realization by connecting relevant networks and enabling the exploitation of connected knowledge (Dobusch & Kapeller, 2017), the most strategic resource in an organization (McEvily & Chakravarthy, 2002). The author intends to explore, through the use of a phenomenological case study, how LIMs are able to influence growth in competitive environment by using a multidimensional organization as a case study.

Literature Review

There is little information in the literature about LIMs, and so this singular case study contributes to research thinking about LIMs and organizational theory in general. There is value in this research as LIMs both reduce costs and increase coordination. Additionally, LIMs can be used to regulate and accelerate interaction between dimensions in a dynamic market where interdependent ecosystems favor more transparent and inclusive approaches to customer

satisfaction (Hautz, Seidl, & Whittington, 2017). For example, unreasonable customer demand within a short product life-cycle may mandate cooperation allowing for capacity sharing after global resources have been reconfigured to the extent possible. While some revenue is lost, sustained advantage may be maintained such that the organization lives to see another order. Consequently, LIMs like Working Groups, can co-create standards by which the sector can both supply and share. These innovations, and others, are more easily transported throughout the organization with the use of LIMs. For the incumbent in the sector, this may require considerable adaptation. For the newcomer, it is a fresh start that mitigates the cost of evolving the digital workflows. In either case, entities evolve and compete on other organizational attributes while being sustained by strategically placed LIMs.

LIMs also provide agility in a complex multi-national organization (McIntyre & Srinivasan, 2017). Complex organizations can only be realistically represented as a network or a system of connected parts; both within the process and to the products that it configures as well as within and across boundaries (Baden-Fuller & Haefliger, 2013). To assemble this information, data was collected from twenty stakeholders in a small to mid-size enterprise (SME). The stakeholders were LIM leaders and LIM members. Let's first discuss what they are.

LIMs

In this section the author will further describe LIM attributes, discuss LIM drivers in an organization, discuss

“Growth Realization through Lateral Integrative Mechanisms”

integrative mechanisms in organizations, look at roles within LIMs, and describe the temporary nature of these dynamic situational structures. Situational adaptation is highly complex and changeable (Miles, Snow, Meyer, & Coleman, 1978). Lateral mechanisms, sometimes nebulously referred to as *secondary structures* or *collaborative structures* in the literature, contribute to growth realization in a multi-national enterprises (MNEs). LIMs include work structures that allow for critical contributors across the various aspects of an organizational structure to assemble, collaborate, create policy, and to problem solve. This construct promotes stability, helps an organization achieve its purpose, and enables an MNE to exploit market opportunities that cross business unit boundaries and reach outside the enterprise (Khanagha, Volberda & Oshri, 2014). LIMs are applied only where needed, and the organization will be required to continuously modify and refine these dynamic mechanisms. These attributes make them ideal for strategy creation and enactment.

To illustrate, LIMs may include the description of roles and relationships, managerial controls, and accountability for each product or service life-cycle (Miles, et al., 1978). While the organization is an integrated and dynamic whole, it includes interrelationships between strategies, structures, and processes (Miles et al., 1978). An agile organizational topology enables adaptive behavior which optimizes effective alignment of the organization with its dynamic environment through the deployment of experience, skills, information, and routines (Almeida & Grant, 1998; Santos & Eisenhardt, 2005; Grant, 1991, 1996; Van Knippenberg, Dahlander, Haas, & George, 2015; Winter, 1987). With this in mind, the author now introduces more formally LIMs by discussing how they encourage organizational alignment by facilitating knowledge transfer throughout the network that is the organization.

Exploited knowledge, at the point of use, is a critical driver for growth (Autio, Sapienza, & Almeida, 2000). Exploiting shared knowledge in an organization enables synergistic growth through system, organizational, technological, and other LIM types. As an example, an LIM may be an organizational structure that links several products together as they utilize similar resources. An example could be a team that uses a unique technology to inspect components that are used in several different products. A quality LIM would exist in the form of a quality requirement measured by a technology that is common across multiple locations. This would be an intuitive application of an LIM in that it would promote the consistent specification compliance of a singular product regardless of where it is made. A system LIM may provide order tracking for all products across all locations. This information could be made known to clients. Other support functions could leverage this information as well for

planning to promote the efficient use of resources. For example, shipping capacity could be determined using system information as described. Lastly, a technology LIM could include a quality verification tool that is used across multiple locations. An example would be a measurement system that is under centralized control for maintenance or calibration purposes. All of these examples, along with many other aspects of measurement, are supported by technology, and end up producing a significant amount of data that can be exploited (George, Haas, & Pentland, 2014).

A matrixed structure can benefit from LIMs as ambiguity needs to be controlled in multi-dimensional organizational designs (Birkinshaw, 2016; Haefliger, Monteiro, Foray, & Von Krogh, 2011). In the figure below, LIMs are shown to connect relevant parts to enhance performance in a specific context. For example, as shown, a quality LIM could watch a quality characteristic of a part that is used in more than one location.

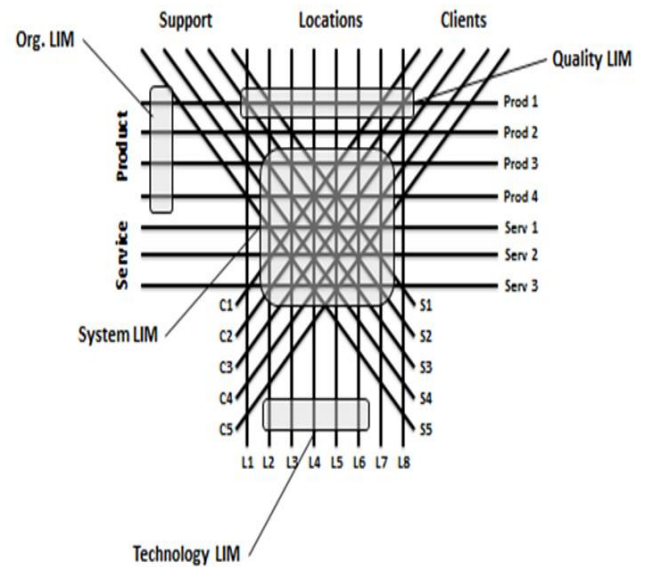


Figure 1. LIMs. This figure illustrates how LIMs can map to a multi-dimensional structure.

Adaptive transformational cycles in businesses are preordained by environmental conditions, or survival is in jeopardy. Reciprocal task interdependencies increase the effort needed for decision making (Galbraith, 1973; McCann & Ferry, 1979; McCann & Galbraith, 1981; Thompson, 1967). This is best handled by LIMs (Galbraith, 1994, 2005; Lawrence & Lorsch, 1967) that have the appropriate alignment towards optimizing profits while minimizing risk. Galbraith (1994) suggests that MNEs require higher levels of lateral coordination when pursuing related diversification as compared to those that pursue unrelated diversification strategies. This is logical as the latter has fewer opportunities for interdependencies. Examples of LIMs include informal networks, communities,

and eco-systems (Goold & Campbell, 2003). LIMs become apparent when managers perceive a problem and spontaneously connect to resolve the issue, when formal groups are designated by executive management to facilitate coordination between businesses, when integrators who are full-time leaders of lateral groups are assigned liaison roles, and when a multidimensional organization demonstrates equal authority in all relevant dimensions driven by a growth opportunity. These stakeholder roles are especially relevant to growth during organizational integrations. Absent the role clarity, ambiguity inhibits the achievement of desirable outcomes that originally motivated the acquisition.

As business units are integrated they mature and become influential by adopting beneficial attributes such as engagement, influence, coordination, collaboration, and capability in an increasingly complex interdependent production environment (Gupta & Govindarajan, 2000; O'Donnell, 2000). LIMs are needed to span across otherwise confining structures. Contextually embedded knowledge is typically difficult to discover, locate, or leverage. Examples of mechanisms to extract relevant knowledge may include boundary spanning functions, liaisons, and an assortment of team structures informing the organization about opportunities and complementing existing structures (Ancona & Caldwell, 1992; Ebadi & Utterback, 1984; Galbraith, 1973; Gersick, 1988; Tushman, 1977; Tushman & Scanlan, 1981). The author considers knowledge flow, whether codified or non-codified, to not be one way, or even two-way, but rather nodal, or systemic (Gupta & Govindarajan, 2000); hence the concept of a *network*. Even though the bandwidth of the network can be increased, absorptive capacity, while expandable, should be taken into consideration as a constraint during growth spurts. The objective is to have relevant knowledge manufactured, if needed, and flow to the right locations autonomously, at the right time, to help MNEs realize growth at the point of opportunity.

Several mechanisms of inter-unit integration have received substantial attention as ways to facilitate the coordination of information flow in dispersed MNE structures (Bartlett & Ghoshal, 1989; Ghoshal and Bartlett, 1994; Gupta & Govindarajan, 2000; Nohria & Ghoshal, 1997). Existing cumbersome organizational configurations must be overcome, or compensated for, by choosing appropriate collaborative mechanisms, especially in complex organizations. Galbraith (1973) put forward three forms including liaison roles, temporary teams, and permanent teams; however, several other types are exposed in this study. The LIMs that will be discussed have been shown to impact knowledge transfer and processing capacity (Gupta & Govindarajan, 1994, 2000). The author has decided not to let these constructs limit the creation of unique lateral mechanisms in the context of this case study.

An operational system can function as a growth enabling LIM as it allows for the exploitation of entrepreneurial opportunities that are often concomitant with market and technology changes. Concurrently, administrative opportunity, through structure and process, is critical for the reduction of uncertainty within an organizational network. LIMs focus on problem solving to facilitate sustained evolution and innovation. They avoid embedding or inappropriate routinization that would contribute to inertia (Miles et al., 1978). Even so, strategy is an opportunity to avoid risk, restore equilibrium, standardize, routinize, streamline, mechanize, and promote consistency. However, maintaining the status quo and reactive adaptation should be considered to be a *strategic failure* or *strategy void*, incurring cumulative risk that is not sustainable. Strategy, on the other hand, may promote a limited set of products directed at a narrow market segment enhancing penetration, it may enhance the efficiency of serving a stable market domain, it may enable the exploitation of new products and market opportunities, and it may enact the harvesting of revenue from core traditional products and customers (Miles et al., 1978). LIMs are intrinsic to strategy as they may contain organic structure formations that include, but are not limited to, cost control specialists that use monitoring techniques and improvement methodologies to improve profitability, decentralized control mechanisms, intensified planning and scheduling capabilities to optimize capacity utilization, enhanced functional structures including a division of labor in a centralized control structure, administrative systems that reveal intelligence and enable effective decision making, environmental scanning to identify internal and external opportunities, and the deployment of communication mechanisms in all dimensions that inform each dimension optimally (Burns & Stalker, 1961).

LIMs have attributes that contribute to their success or failure within their respective environments (Denison, Hart, & Kahn, 1996). In the event that goals and values in the business units are not congruent with the goals of corporate, knowledge transfer is inhibited (Ghoshal & Bartlett, 1990). Consequently, LIMs may be effective for the exploitation of collective knowledge and help manage the relationship between the unit and the corporate center. Given that an MNE is a network of business units differentiated by roles, resources, and environment (Nohria & Ghoshal, 1997), it is important to consider that this network of units is simultaneously present in each of its contexts. Business units gain significance and can draw from their local contexts by contributing knowledge and competence to the shared network (Almeida & Phene, 2004; Andersson, Forsgren, & Holm, 2002; Davis & Meyer, 2004; Frost, 2001; Manolopoulos, Papanastassiou, & Pearce, 2005). Harvesting this knowledge from disparate sources on-demand reduces the dependency on centralized sources

in the MNE and better ensures relevancy to local contexts (Frost 2001) that may be evident in the limited variety of forms of LIMs illustrated below. For example, the time needed for integration completion is often overstated and the effort needed to merge cultures is typically understated (Loomer & Harington, 2003). The challenge initially centers on access to this disparate knowledge so that transfer and integration can occur (Rugman & Verbeke, 2004; Zander & Solvell, 2000). The purpose of the efficient transfer of knowledge is to accelerate the innovation process, encourage the replication of capabilities, and to exploit the combination of knowledge assets (Hansen & Lovas, 2004; Subramaniam & Venkatarman, 2001; Winter & Szulanski, 2002; Zander & Solvell, 2000).

MNE leaders are concerned with the creation and implementation of LIMs to induce nodes in the network to share and create connectedness for mutual ongoing benefit (Eisenhardt & Galunic, 2000). For example, business unit and products or services leaders collaborate in frequent fact-focused and pragmatic group meetings where shared interests, competitor moves, customer feedback, and technology developments are discussed. This structured activity is an LIM that may be named as a periodic activity.

Business units need to be viewed as entities with bargaining power and influence in addressable markets where entrepreneurship can be exploited for growth synergy realization (Birkinshaw, 1997; Birkinshaw & Hood, 1998; Cantwell & Mudambi, 2005; Forsgren & Pedersen, 2000). This profitability enhancement can be achieved through opportunity discovery and trust-based collaboration (Eisenhardt & Galunic, 2000) across distributed teams that may be virtual and dynamic (Bell, 2002). Companywide control structures may not be complementary with local environments which have substantial influence over business unit activities (Andersson & Forsgren, 1996; Nohria & Ghoshal, 1994). The recognition of each business unit's unique situation and the subsequent adaptation of control systems create the capability to share within the network (Nohria & Ghoshal, 1994). This strengthens the networks ability to realize growth synergies.

Knowledge has come to be known as the most strategic resource in an organization (McEvily & Chakravathy, 2002). This is especially critical in multi-national enterprises with interdependent business units that move work between locations to level-load capacity. In this case, various influencing factors come into play; including, but not limited to, operational structure, LIMs, and control mechanisms. The firm's ability to exploit knowledge related resources effectively is a fundamental aspect of the firms competitive positioning and attributes value to the knowledge because knowledge enables growth. Consequently, knowledge management, for the purpose of efficient exploitation, has been widely researched (Doz, Santos, & Williamson, 2001; Gupta & Govindarajan, 2000;

Zander & Kogut, 1995); however, this exploitation needs to be considered in change management schemes related to the exploitation of growth synergies. From this research, an emerging topic has been the relationship between organizational features and the efficient flow of exploitable knowledge (Björkman, Barner-Rasmussen, & Li, 2004; Harzing & Noorderhaven, 2006; Schlegelmilch & Chini, 2003). Despite the difficulties, it is important for this case study that an understanding is created around the efficient transfer of knowledge for growth realization.

Organizational factors substantially correlate to knowledge creation, availability, and exploitation. The organizational design used must remove rather than promote constraints that block stakeholders from contributing meaningfully to the organization's purpose (Miles et al., 1978). This may include both information flow and ongoing education (Rose, 1990). Hansen (1999) found that project teams quickly searched for useful information in other subunits where there were weak knowledge links. He also found that weak inter-unit ties enhance transfer speed of tacit knowledge as compared to strong ties. When complex knowledge is transferred to both stable and dynamic areas of an operation, strong ties are needed. Bresman, Birkinshaw, & Nobel (1999) found that tacit knowledge is best transferred through intense communication characterized by substantial personal interaction. This is especially the case in international acquisitions involving knowledge transfer (Bass, 1981). Gupta and Govindarajan (2000) suggest that this intense communication be facilitated in multidimensional organizations through the use of lateral integrative structures like liaison personnel, task forces, or permanent teams with these tasks being performed in addition to regular duties. This structural perspective is extended by Hansen (2002) who found that project teams obtain information faster from relevant sources when there are shorter network paths between units that possess related knowledge. Consequently, they tend to complete projects faster. Additionally, he showed that problems could be mitigated when direct relations are established. This specifically related to the transfer of non-codified knowledge. If the information is not codified it could be harmful, as the enhanced maintenance costs are continued. While Dyer and Singh (1998) emphasize the link between information sharing and alliance success, Tsai (2002) further explores knowledge sharing coordination and found that a formal hierarchical structure, in the form of centralization, had a substantial negative effect on knowledge sharing. He also discovered that when interactions are social, informal lateral relations had a substantial positive effect on business units when they compete with each other in the same markets. This is, however, not the case when they compete for internal resources.

Boundary spanning personnel and information gatekeepers create an organizational environment that is

conducive to information exchange (Tushman & Katz, 1980; Tushman & Scanlan, 1981). Liaison mechanisms enhance inter-unit knowledge exchange by identifying relevant and potentially beneficial elements of knowledge to consolidate in the MNE. The gatekeeper makes this information available to all units, while keeping it organized, version controlled, and accurate. Research has shown that there is a relationship between communication and its frequency on knowledge transfer (Bresman et al., 1999; Ghoshal & Bartlett, 1988). Team structures enact mechanisms of interaction, creating social capital driven by trust, a shared vision, similar practices, shared identities, and epistemic cultures (Brown & Duguid, 1991, 2001; Knorr-Cetina, 1999; Tsai & Ghoshal, 1998). These communities of practice (COPs), also viewed as LIMs if oriented across organizational silos or extended beyond the organization, create technical language, shared semantics, and help integrate knowledge into the organization through knowledge sharing (Grant, 1996; Shaver, 2006).

Teams are typically formally recognized, have legitimate power, a sense of mission, have access to financial and human resource information, have enhanced knowledge in the subject matter, and have substantial experience (Takeuchi & Nonaka, 1996). Temporary team structures may have a subset of these resources. Teams may be limited in size and construct and may exclude needed expertise (Grant, 1996) because it is on-demand, or available as needed. Furthermore, permanent team members may not keep up with relevant information migrations if they are decoupled from their work areas. They may also be caught in an embedded routinized culture, due to experience or other factors, which may encourage rigidity and dampen needed innovation in a dynamic marketplace. The roles of LIMs should therefore be considered as both temporary and dynamic.

Hedlund (1994) suggests that temporary teams be drawn from pools that experience these dynamics rather than be a permanent structure across dynamic pools. This keeps the team synchronized with clients, product life-cycles, and the marketplace. Process owners who are unwilling to share for the benefit of the common good would benefit from and be encouraged by an incentive system that rewards the right behavior and an organization design that encourages connectedness. Roth and O'Donnell (1996) found that an appropriate incentive structure adapted to the situation, temporary or permanent, had a positive impact on information sharing.

In summary, the transfer of knowledge across the organizational network must be opportunistic and timely to be meaningful. Timely availability and consumption of meaningful knowledge is critical for organizational agility, enabling the exploitation of growth synergies. LIMs are designed to build bridges between business units and between dimensions in an organization while connecting the

organizational network to the corporate center thereby enabling mutual benefit. LIMs promote organizational cultural attributes conducive to growth realization. They span boundaries that otherwise would contribute to organizational inertia and entropy. Furthermore, they may be situationally adaptive, conceptually permanent, and dynamically temporary.

Precipitating Event

The organization that was studied transitioned from a traditional M-form organizational structure to a multidimensional organizational structure in the interest of realizing growth synergies. This affected the performance of the global value chain created by the corporation generally and by the business division specifically. The organizational structure was augmented and stabilized through the addition of LIMs. Concurrently a designed relationship with corporate was applied to the overall design. This organizational event is the object of the study. The event selected had gravitas with the participants, as their employment future relied on its success. The impact of the event was not well known in advance of the action as the structure is novel. The precipitating event followed the realization that a structural change could enhance profitability of the corporation. This organization was operating in an extremely competitive and complex environment and, as such, client satisfaction was critical to gaining and maintaining market share. The need to make a substantial change was recognized by the leadership of the enterprise and is the subject of the study.

Quality of the Research

Creswell (2014) describes validity in qualitative research as being the determination of whether the findings are accurate from the standpoint of the author, the participant, and the readers of an account. In this case, language and meaning are the data. Creswell (2014), in parallel with Lincoln and Guba's (1985) approach, offers qualitative researchers eight possible strategies for checking the accuracy of findings; triangulation, member-checking, rich descriptions, clarification of bias, the use of negative or discrepant information, prolonged time in the field, peer debriefing, and the use of an external auditor. The author selectively used these strategies to ensure data validity with a focus on triangulation, peer debriefing, and member checking.

Endogenous validity refers to the validity of established causal relationships (Yin, 1994; Lamnek, 1995) or internal logic of the research (Punch, 1998). This was achieved by establishing a clear thematic focus that guided the case selection, abstracting and comparing, conducting peer reviews of causal relationships, and by having an open and comprehensive explanation building. A thematic focus was evident in a clear definition of an overarching research theme (cross-unit synergies), a narrowing research focus

(operative synergies), and a specific research question (the sustainable realization of growth synergies) along with a compatible case selection in which the constructs of interest could be discovered. Continuous abstracting and comparing (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, 1996) occurred as the author continuously compared data sets to build higher order constructs, preliminary results to emerging data to confirm or refine results, and observed causal patterns within the existing literature. This improved the validity of causal relations (Yin, 1994). Peer reviews of causal relationships were discussed with research colleagues for the purpose of capturing and testing additional perspectives based on experience in the field. Additionally, it enabled the validation of internal consistency and theoretical relevance of the Author’s arguments. The final technique for internal validity was through open and comprehensible building of explanations and causal relationships. The results were documented in such a way that the reader could reconstruct the causal relationship (Mayring, 1996). Openly, the author indicated initial ideas, deduced assumptions, and challenged potential inconsistencies.

Exogenous validity refers to the generalizability of research results critical for robust theory development (Sutton & Straw, 1995; Weick, 1995b) and depends on the research approach (Yin, 1994). Single case study empirical findings are difficult to generalize. Yin (1994) emphasizes that case studies do not allow for statistical generalization. More specifically, it is difficult to make inferences about a population based on empirical data collected in a sample. While issues of generalizability from case studies is severe (Denzin, 1989; Yin, 1994), single-case studies are recognized to be substantial from an evolutionary perspective (Stake, 1995). Single case studies can also provide new ideas and new thinking paradigms. They can help modify existing theories by exposing gaps and helping to fill them. There are several facts about this study that support the author’s conclusions that the findings and propositions will be at least somewhat generalizable. Several of the constructs can be confirmed as being present in existing literature, indicating general theoretical relevance of the research (Eisenhardt, 1989). The findings were confirmed through consultation with participants, who are operationally capable with varied experience in the industry, suggesting the potential transferability of the claims. Finally, the findings were somewhat generalizable due to the continuous comparison of similarities and differences within case items across different levels of analysis.

Reliability refers to the possibility that researchers can replicate the research activity and produce the same findings (Eisenhardt, 1989; Yin, 1994). A challenge for this replication is the attribute of qualitative research, in that it is bound to the context in which it is conducted (Lamnek, 1995), including time. Reliability in qualitative studies is best served by presenting sufficient information so that the

reader can draw his/her own conclusions (Yin, 1994). The author attempted to ensure reliability through the explicit disclosure of the research design, including a detailed description of the research process, case selection criteria, interview guide, and methods for collecting and analyzing empirical data.

Data and Analysis

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological research study, using Moustakas, (1994) modified van Kaam method, was to explore the real-time experiences of stakeholders, or co-researchers, as they lived and influenced events occurring around them. Awareness is a transient experience (Freeman, 2000) that may involve exerting influence, letting go, and redirecting energy and attention (Depraz, Varela, & Vermersch, 2003). It also involves being present physically and mentally in daily life. Stakeholders have to anticipate events, make sense of existing environments, and exert influence over future trends. Weick (1995b) suggests that sense-making is a retrospective cognitive process that explains unanticipated events. He also suggests that events in a socially-created world both support and constrain action. Weick, Sutcliffe, and Obstfeld (2005) later suggest that individuals form both assumptions and conscious anticipations of future events. By examining sense-making and the development of mental models through actual lived, shared experiences, this study captures the subjective processes that have been largely ignored in the context of the connection between organizational design and growth in a multi-unit firm. Using the experience of stakeholders, the author presents a conceptualization of how individual participants in this study made sense of their lived experience. This was an ongoing process for participants as they refined their understanding of lived experiences and established new equilibriums.

This section presents the empirical part of this study through the thoughts, perceptions, and lived experiences of twenty participants who took part in this phenomenological case study. These participants went through the precipitating event that led to the subsequent organizational transformation of a division. The purpose of this study was to explore a single case study of a multi-unit firm by examining how LIMs and a designed relationship with the corporate center contributed to the realization of growth synergies. The constructs that emerged from the data identify key elements and organizational designs that contribute to continuous synergistic growth. A robust and effective structure aligned for growth needs to be exploited to enhance profitability.

The individual textual descriptions as well as composite descriptions are concisely oriented and illustrated in a theme map structure. Moustakas (1994) suggested that the integration of textual and structural descriptions into a composite description, such as a relational table, is a path

for understanding the essence of an experience. The composite description is an intuitive and reflective integrative description of the meanings and essences of a phenomenon, of which the entire group of individuals is making sense. The participants create meaning through their awareness of the environment, reflection on their experiences, consultation with others, focused response to an enquiry, and iterative refinement to these enquiries.

Coding

Data collection was facilitated by an interview protocol with specific questions oriented in a sequenced schema. Participants were solicited as volunteers from a pool of leaders based on a willingness to share information about the transformation of the sub-division. Each volunteer co-researcher participated in the changes personally. Following each question, the participants' response was determined to be linked to the question asked and was determined to be meaningful prior to continuing. An answer could trigger a clarifying question, or a question formed to solicit a more fulsome answer, if needed. The additional information modified the answer and once again was determined to be fulsome or not. The data was added then to the data sheet and coded. Sub-code themes were also determined and grouped by code and sub-code. The data was surveyed by the author, who, due to personal experience, was able to apply an *analysis for good* (ANOG). Slight modifications were made as needed to reduce the noise in the data and ensure completeness and clarity. This was accomplished by consolidating like data points and simplifying others by stripping out noise and redundancy in the answers. The data was then re-sorted and generalized through categorizing. A pivot-table was used to extract themes in the wording. The raw data was then posted in a table. In some cases most of the themes were unique in which case a table was not used. From this data, dependencies, relationship, and the sequence of events were determined and organized into a theme relationship map. In some cases the data collected appeared as though the participant was confused about the question. In these cases the Author followed up with the participant and then added the newly acquired information to the raw data previously collected.

The raw data was collected from each participant for each data domain and sub-domain in the sequence in which it is presented in this chapter to promote a progression of thought. The data is separated into exogenous and endogenous domains as well with selected focus in both areas. In some cases, like roles, the participants offered information on themselves while commenting on data provided by their peers. Patterns that emerge in the data are presented as textural responses (what happened), structural responses (how did it happen), or composite descriptions (what the group experienced). Data responses that occurred most frequently within the theme category were given more

significance and were typically mentioned first. Data was interpreted into theme patterns. These were broken into themes and then concisely into propositions, or findings of the study. Data items that referred to individuals, functions, line of business, locations, systems, or company names were obfuscated, eliminated, or given a pseudonym. The propositions, or findings, were formed and listed numerically. Within each proposition, a two-word summary was formed along with a statement that sums up the finding. For example, a central theme, norm strategy, or trigger may have emerged from the data as a result of coding. This data could then be categorized or filtered through the constructs being discussed that may include the strategic frame, horizontal strategies, or a narrowed scope as examples. This was the beginning of the theme map, or the outermost layer. The layers could then be elaborated on by breaking the outermost layer into sub-layers until it was reasonable to stop. This theme map was created to better describe the themes in the data and to show relationships and sequences between unique data items.

Endogenous Data

This section discusses data internal to the organization. Previous research pertaining to growth from related diversification recommends that organizational designs include cooperative constructs (Ansoff, 1965; Hill & Hoskisson, 1987; Rumelt, 1974; Wrigley, 1970). The data suggests that the decentralized organizational design used stimulates, rather than restricts, business unit self-interest. As long as upper echelons are supportive, it liberates entrepreneurialism embedded in existing employees. The division was based on a design of decentralized collaboration through connected communities, or ecosystems, that balance stability and flexibility for continuous and efficient growth realization (Denyer, Parry & Flowers, 2011). Furthermore, the study reveals integrative mechanisms that further enhanced the capability of the division to influence profitability. In light of this, data was collected from stakeholders at a similar level. The scope of the data participants includes P&L leaders in all dimensions of the organization, including (a) product leaders, (b) location leaders, (c) support leaders, and (d) client-facing leaders.

Observations. This section discusses observations about various constructs that aided the organization in being successful by enhancing profitability. It includes both specific examples and a description of how they work. Literature suggests that LIMs can augment an organization's efforts to realize synergistic growth (Gupta & Govindarajan, 2000; O'Donnell, 2000). According to De Jaegher and Di Paolo (2007, 2008) the structural coupling between individuals is social if they engender an autonomous dynamic. Coupling, according to Weick (1976), is optimally loose when integrative mechanisms can maintain an

identity, uniqueness, and separateness. The looseness of the coupling enhances adaptability to changing conditions (Eisenhardt&Bharia, 2002). Ideally, an LIM would be auto-poietic, able to create and maintain itself, its behavior, its connectedness, its growth, and even react to the need to dissolve, expand, cope, or fold into itself (Capra, 1996; Luhman, 1990; Maturana& Varela, 1980, 1987). This study suggests that the extensive use of integrative mechanisms may not lead to optimal success regarding growth realization. It rather suggests that LIMs should be selectively applied and that they should be aligned and complementary to optimize the profitability of an organization. An over-application of LIMs is a burden to the organization creating inertia and needless decision-making complexity. An under-application of LIMs also creates inertia as the organization is under-supported. Stakeholder fatigue then encourages inertia. An optimal combination will match the MNE’s situation, but will be dynamic in that the LIMs will be transitioned in, transitioned out, or evolved. The data that emerged from division leaders suggest that there are three types of LIMs: (a) formal work-structures, (b) shared systems, and (c) cultural mechanisms.

Formal work-structures. Formal work-structures may include prescribed rules, structures, or procedures that coordinate cross-business collaboration. These coordination mechanisms focus on the process of interaction and are a special form of coupling (Maturana& Varela, 1980) that complement the organizations structure by accelerating decision making (Choo, 1998). They promote predictability, shared meaning, purpose, and the perception of problems or opportunities that the organization needs to resolve (Choo, 2002). These mechanisms may have a formal name, membership status, and defined roles. These roles may include responsibilities, reporting relationships, and accountability. The role could apply to a single person, a team, or a board with governance. These structures have the ability to make decisions on cross-business issues. They encourage growth within a decentralized structure by accelerating the organization’s ability to collaborate with speed. Secondary decision-making structures bring decision makers together in a structured and focused context. The ability to collaborate and achieve success in this way builds trust between stakeholders. Trust accelerates growth realization and solves turf disputes (Covey, 2006). It may reduce the need for formal agreements with extensive detail, as both parties know that they have each other’s best interest in mind (Dirks & Ferrin, 2001; Ferrin& Dirks, 2003, Jennings, Norman, Faratin, O'Brien, & Odgers, 2000). Secondary decision-making structures encourage trust in decentralized structures and reduce the cost of collaboration. Dyer (1997) suggests that alliances between parties who have established mutual trust help to maximize collaborative value. These structures enhance organizational efficiency by selectively focusing limited attention capacity on prioritized

strategic actions. Discussions around opportunities may also lead to the discovery of additional needed actions as participants gain a shared intuition and a wider perspective on addressable markets (Eisenhardt&Galunic, 2000). Knowledge also helps with the more efficient distribution of tasks across involved business. The ability to select initiatives that have the best profitable opportunity may more easily come from engaged cross-business team members. Commitment and cross-business resource trade-offs that leverage strengths may be required to realize the benefit of initiatives (Martin, 2002). Other operational norms and collaborative values guide productive relationships that can emerge in decision-making team members (Jones, Felps, & Bigley, 2007). This culture of collaboration, properly aligned, and executing selected profitable opportunities, will be beneficial to the continuous realization of growth synergies.

Table 1. LIMs: Formal Work Structures

Data Record	LIM Type
L6	Month-end closing protocol
L10	Revenue recognition policy
L11	Location revenue recognition policy
L23	Budget
L29	Platform testing protocol
L30	First article testing protocol
L31	Workflow documentation
L45	MU registration
L46	Location productivity report
L54	Job description
L67	Automated system testing protocol
L76	System feature requirements document
L77	System tool user acceptance test
L78	System feature test QA protocol
L87	Patent registration protocol
L97	Knowledge system document template
L98	System asset capture profiles
L99	Remote login protocols
L100	Work order template
L101	Asset specification template
L102	Delivery notification template
L104	Delivery tool requirements
L105	Location visitors log
L106	System access log
L107	Certificate of destruction
L109	System user access list
L135	Work order (WO) entry procedure
L149	Client on-boarding procedure
L150	MU training certificates
L151	Location network topology
L152	System feature bug tracker
L160	Revenue worksheets
L161	Inventory of material codes
L162	Staffing requisitions

“Growth Realization through Lateral Integrative Mechanisms”

L165	Addressable market analysis
L166	API integrations
L167	Change management protocol
L168	Competitor analysis
L169	Liability prevention controls
L170	Pricing strategy
L171	Product portfolio
L172	Product/Service life-cycle strategy
L173	Quality management system

L34	Intra-system database field mapping
L35	Intra-system feature mapping
L39	Location budget plan
L40	Location budget plan
L41	Location budget plan
L42	Hardware asset inventory
L43	Hardware asset inventory
L47	Function business system
L48	Hardware asset inventory
L51	WW function metrics
L53	Asset aging report
L55	Location asset barcoding metrics
L56	Location asset barcoding report
L57	Location asset inventory
L62	Location asset purge report
L63	Location retention program documentation
L64	Attrition report
L65	Location retention program documentation
L66	Stock purchasing report
L68	Automated system operational Documentation
L69	System virtual tour
L70	System embedded rate card
L71	System credentials protocol
L74	System feature mapping
L80	System client view
L81	System scheduling interface
L82	Operations floor control system
L83	System feature
L88	IP management system
L89	Workflow documentation repository
L91	Location quarterly security review
L92	System migration plan
L93	Client audit assessment
L94	System migration plan
L95	Location improvement roadmap
L103	Open work order reconciliation report
L110	Location quality performance report
L112	Specification database
L113	Database user list
L115	ERP floor management system
L116	Asset chain-of-custody report
L117	Location operations productivity report
L119	Location hardware use hours tracker
L120	Location hardware utilization report
L121	Hardware preventive maintenance tracker
L122	Location revenue variance commentary
L123	Location profitability variance commentary
L125	System WO reconciliation report
L126	WO field error report

LIMs, functioning as secondary-operating structures, may improve the implementation of growth-based initiatives by enhancing cross-business collaboration. Role clarity reduces duplicity of efforts. It also reduces managerial efforts needed to deal with conflict. Deployments in complex environments require clarity and the ability to learn. The effect of this learning is potentially the new and necessary routines that emerge during the evolution of an organization (Benner &Tushman, 2003). Secondary operating structures may serve as tacit knowledge repositories (Jones, et al., 2007) as well as agents of knowledge diffusion (Zander &Kogut, 1995). Domain experience is needed to develop solutions that exploit growth opportunities. The author took a snapshot of LIMs put in place around the precipitating event and easily uncovered 159 occurrences, even though many more existed. For purposes of this study these occurrences were consolidated into unique entities and divided into the three categories described below.

Shared systems. Shared systems LIMs helped to facilitate growth and integration. These are listed in the table below and include cross-business databases, information systems, storage systems, and other systems that are common across businesses. These systems provide intelligence, real-time tracking of work, and knowledge about how to conduct work. Systems provide both knowledge exchange and knowledge creation through analysis (Brown & Magill, 1998; Hansen, 2002; Noorderhaven&Harzing, 2009; Tanriverdi&Venkatraman, 2005). Quick decisions in knowledge-rich environments depend on quick access to relevant information. Participants expressed a desire for more information than was available during and after the precipitating event, as this assisted with decision-making accuracy and speed.

Table 2. LIMs: Shared systems

Data Record	LIM Type
	Knowledge Management System
L7	Hardware specifications
L8	Software specifications
L13	Monthly LOB financial packets
L20	Hardware tracking system
L28	Location productivity tracker
L33	Intra-system feature mapping

“Growth Realization through Lateral Integrative Mechanisms”

L128	Location audit report	L15	Verticals meetings
L130	Hardware inventory system	L16	Weekly strategy huddles
L131	WW workflow productivity tracker	L17	Talent review process
L132	Workflow hardware refresh tracker	L18	Coaching and mentoring program
L134	Sales forecast	L19	EU-US strategic bridge
L136	Open WO report	L21	LOB 3 year strategic plan
L137	Client rate card	L22	Off_load analysis
L138	Rate card analysis report	L24	LOB Off_load capability matrix
L140	Service level agreements	L25	Escalation contact list
L141	Weekly workflow capacity forecast	L26	Global Task tracker
L142	Off-load hourly reallocation report	L27	Information distribution lists
L145	MU curriculum	L32	Business progress tracker
L146	System usage courses	L36	Location operations improvement plan
L147	System financial queries	L37	Location operations improvement plan
L148	System enhancement queue	L38	Location operations improvement plan
L153	Project Management Office (PMO) monthly report	L44	Location audit
L154	Function capacity ramp tracker	L49	Location workflow metrics
L155	Capacity utilization report	L50	RFP
L156	Quarterly cost mitigation plan	L52	WW function metrics performance report
L157	Workflow training plans	L58	MDD leader trip report
L158	System consolidation plan	L59	Intercompany rate card
L159	Security control gap analysis	L60	Best practices documentation
L174	System user interface (UI)	L61	MU course
		L72	System training
		L73	MU course
		L75	System feature gap analysis
		L79	System migration plan
		L84	System migration plan
		L85	System migration plan
		L86	Division newsletter
		L90	MU function curriculum
		L96	Operations function integration plan
		L108	Hardware redeployment tracker
		L111	Location issue resolution tracker
		L114	Hardware inventory list
		L118	Productivity metrics target list
		L124	Location P&L
		L127	Capacity availability report
		L129	Division security portal
		L133	Sales funnel report
		L139	Scope of services document
		L143	Management Review
		L144	Client KPI dashboard
		L163	Communication plan
		L164	Mission/Vision statements

Cultural mechanisms. Socio-cultural LIMs are informal social or cultural mechanisms that may involve vertical and horizontal activities that help to establish and mature the collaborative mindset. This relates directly to significant overriding norms that critical leaders focus on. Many of the cultural LIMs that were established are listed in the table below. These norms align interests and control behaviors. Strong integration mechanisms support an organizational design that exploits the super-additive benefits of decentralized collaboration and collocated work (Olson, Teasley, Covi, & Olson, 2002). Note that while some of these may appear to be formal work structures or shared systems, they have a shared impact as they facilitate collaboration between organizational silos. For example, a client key performance indicator (KPI) dashboard is a shared system that, with transparency, helps all locations that service the client to see where there are opportunities to reinforce success and improve sub-standard performance.

Table3. LIMs: Cultural mechanisms

Data Record	LIM Type
L1	Workflow synergy analysis
L2	Sales advisory board
L3	Sector development board
L5	MU course assignment tracker
L9	Labor sharing policy
L12	Offshore utilization report
L14	Horizontals meetings

In summary, the data suggests that LIMs are prevalent in business transformations. They augment organizational designs by providing structure that can be reused, systems that facilitate growth, and cultural mechanisms that connect and influence dimensional leaders. LIMs are intrinsically synergistic, as they connect dimensions in areas of common interest. Some LIMs are multi-purpose by influencing more than one LIM type.

“Growth Realization through Lateral Integrative Mechanisms”

LIM action. LIMs help to sustain the realization of growth synergies because they strengthen organizational constructs by making it capable. LIMs enable the sharing of knowledge that makes the production network capable and so available for opportunities discovered. They compensate for the ripple effect of the intrusion that is the opportunity. For example, the temporary increase in capacity consumption to exploit the opportunity is compensated for through load balancing mechanisms or the introduction of new technology.

“Provide weekly capacity remaining report for major workflows [LOBs].” (SF301)

The new technology may come through a community of practice LIM. The selection of opportunities can be influenced by the mutual gain of the division in relation to objectives set in strategic plans. The organization can enhance the selection of opportunities by optimizing them. This may include upselling, fulsome rate structures, and opportunities for overages. The collaboration of division leaders, who are interested in profitable growth, is a super-additive as it focuses constructive attention on the local business unit to enable growth.

“[I initiated an] upselling strategy and training for operations... met with the team to discuss further and roll out to locations.” (SF274)

The needed collaboration and transparency within the division are enabled by LIMs such as ERP system reports, strategic huddles, or technology groups. A total of 127 rich data descriptions emerged from the data as illustrated in the following three figures.

In the figure below, a number of LIMs are illustrated. Focused actions in the LIMs include the ability to accomplish analysis. The analysis actions allows for the creation of metrics and the use of them to help with off-loading within the production network. The industry that the division operates in requires significant security controls. These are validated through internal and external audits. Financial focused actions include creating budgets and operational plans that support them. Related are client actions that include forecast trackers, rate cards, and predicted profitability. Actions were listed that related to creating parity around controls in all locations. Technology is a dominant theme in actions that require intellectual property (IP) protection. As the division expands, job descriptions are LIMs that have to be created to establish the list and segregation of duties, thereby enabling accountability. A learning organization has tasks associated with knowledge creation and distribution. LIMs are needed to help the lines of business (LOBs) consolidate and integrate. LOB information helps with financial performance reviews as it reveals the influence of cost reductions. There were focused actions that included creating reports with relevant metrics. Plans for LOB enhancement included off-load plans and escalation to help

with moving actions forward. LIMs included policies that were created to govern the control of assets, for example. The quality system enabled reliability. Rate cards were created for intercompany work that benefitted other divisions and protected P&Ls where the work was done. LIMs enabled synergy utilization through workflow reports.

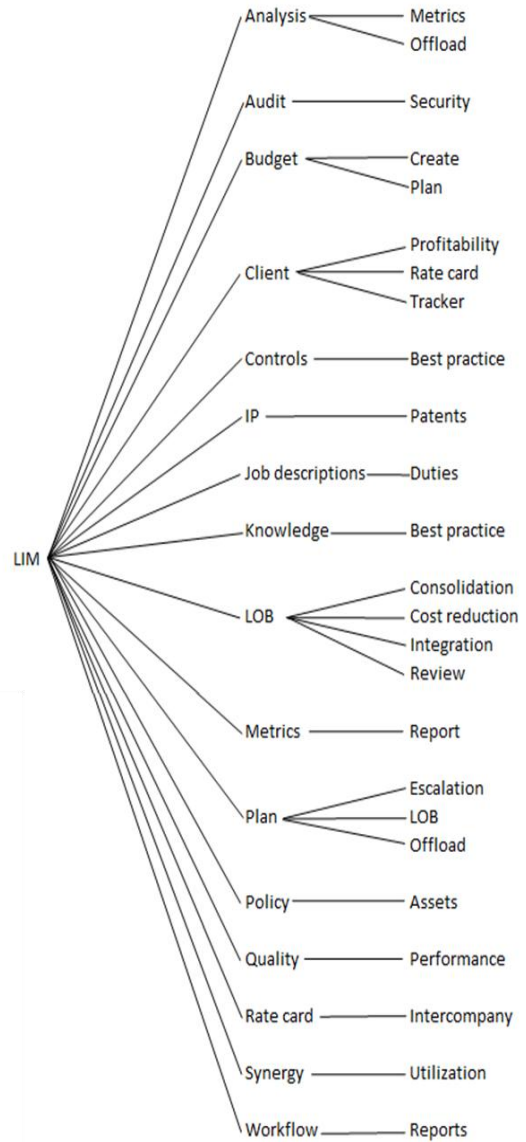


Figure 2. Focused action: LIMs. This figure maps LIMs as a theme category into descriptive sub-groupings.

Other focused actions through the LIMs related to the creation of reports, support, and actions related to creating action trackers. Knowledge oriented LIMs are illustrated in the figure below. Reports that were created helped division leaders to know about progress and real-time status. Reports related to the status of assets including aging, counts, and inventory accuracy. Audit reports showed compliancy. Roadmaps helped division leaders know if they were on schedule with regard to expansion projects, schedules for work, and trending analysis for forecasting purposes. Reports helped with performance awareness, including profitability. Focused actions included support activities,

“Growth Realization through Lateral Integrative Mechanisms”

which included client on-boarding activities, support for performance related tasks, the status of tasks themselves, and reports that helped with the review of statuses. The last area of focus action that is influenced by LIMs is the use of trackers. Trackers include discovery roadmaps augmented by market analysis. Trackers are roadmaps that were used to monitor status on roadmaps. Trackers show capacity ramp-ups and performance or productivity.

“[I] participate in unified productivity tracking WW as well as provide regular updates on available capacity for primary workflows.” (SF284)

“[I] establish capacity targets desired and ramp-up schedule for each.” (SF344)

Lastly, trackers can show resource allocations including hardware. Resources can be redeployed to fulfill capacity needs at any location.

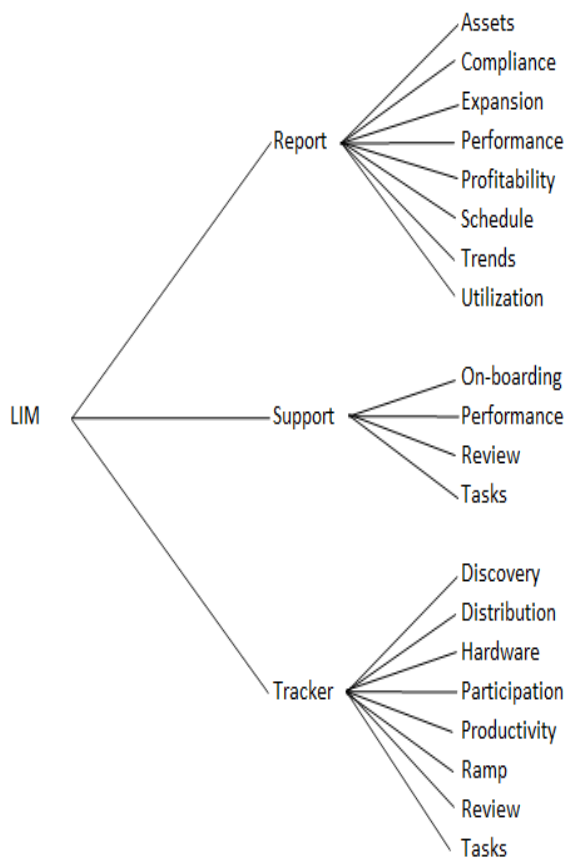


Figure 3. Focused action: LIM knowledge. This figure maps LIM knowledge as a theme category into descriptive sub-groupings.

The last figure that illustrates focused actions includes LIMs that relate to systems. This is shown in the figure below. Systems are prevalent LIMs in the case study division.

“Many ERP enhancements are in the queue which will increase productivity.” (SF327)

Focused actions regarding systems were numerous and significantly influential in the transformation of the division. Tasks related to the uniform use of systems help with alignment between and within facilities. Systems assisted

with the tracking of assets. Systems were critical for the deployment of automation and they enforce best practices by embedding them into the workflow. When business consolidations or integrations happen, the new business embraces the new system, and benefits from it.

“[Client name] has client view access and will review prior to [LOB work] being done.” (SF159)

Systems assist with cost reductions as they eliminate wasted effort. System databases allow for the storage and retrieval of important information. The enhancement lists were large; however, when enhanced features were rolled out, the benefit was significant to financial performance. The systems supported global purchasing that saved money on materials.

“[Location] is paying outrageous prices for stock... [they] will start ordering stock through my team.” (SF105)

Additionally, systems helped with servicing clients by managing workflows and the rate cards associated with them. The system supported MU (Media University) used to collect and distribute information. Reports were built and retrieved for analysis and review of workflow performance.

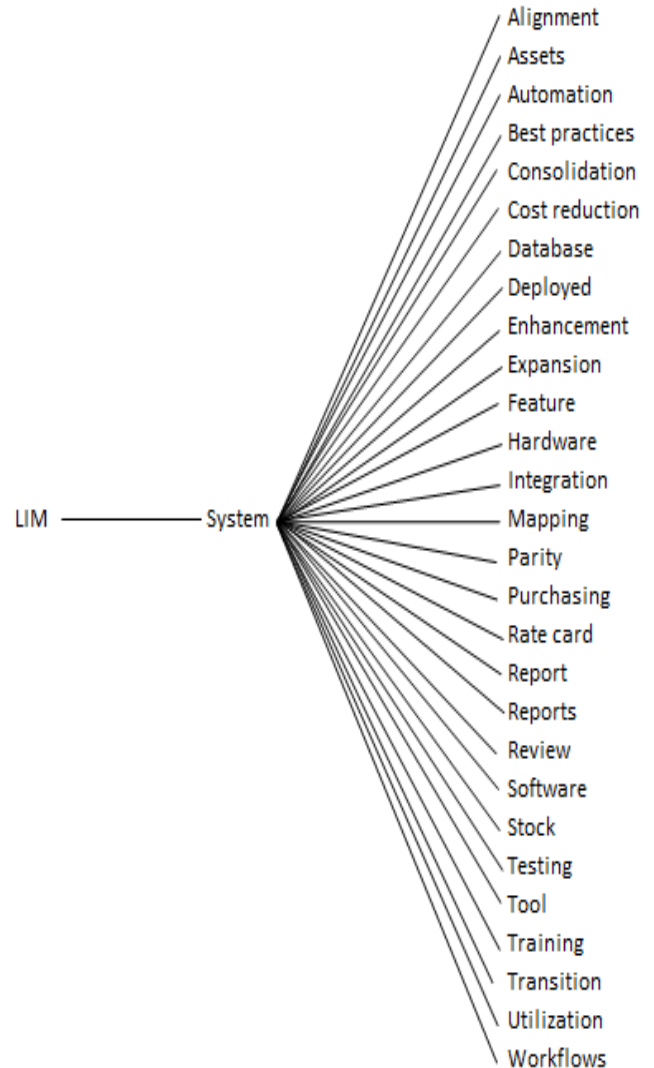


Figure 4. Focused action: LIM’s system. This figure maps LIM systems as a theme category into descriptive sub-groupings.

Conclusions

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological research study was to explore a single case study of a multi-unit firm by examining how a complex organizational design augmented by LIMs contributes to the realization of growth synergies in a moderately dynamic market. For example, recent studies have begun to suggest that products and services are experiencing shorter life-cycles (D’Aveni, Dagnino, & Smith, 2010). For the purpose of this study the phenomenon or object of the analysis was the precipitating event that led to permanent cross-business collaboration within the MNE. The unit of analysis on which the phenomenon was studied is the strategy and the organizational design that leads to sustainable desired outcomes. These outcomes are described as sustained corporate advantage.

A phenomenological case study is a means to the experiential reaction and sense-making of participants as they transform their own role and behavior to adapt to a new paradigm of leadership while achieving desirable outcomes. Much of the profitability optimization literature focuses on diversification and operative synergies, like cost optimization, rather than growth synergies as a phenomenon (Li & Greenwood, 2004). This perspective overlooks the profitability enhancements that can be experienced through the unique combination of capabilities and strategy. By examining growth synergies within the division through a phenomenological single case study, the author was able to explore, discover, and capture findings that have previously been ignored. The data supporting these findings has a number of strengths including that the participants were stakeholders, that the participants were knowledgeable, that the timing of the study allowed for a holistic and reflective view, that the situation was real, that the observations were based in reality, that the author was a participant and stakeholder, that the author was knowledgeable in the subject matter, that the data was triangulated, that an iterative approach was used to established data clarity and fulsomeness, that the participants were willing to participate and contribute, and that the participants were able to speak freely to inform the data collected. The key findings were centered on endogenous and exogenous factors as well as opportunities for wider influence within the corporation through an organizational structure that is scalable. These findings change the way we conceptualize the model of an organization and how it can contribute to growth. The author used the findings to create, or extend, mid-range theory regarding sustainable growth realization in multi-unit firms for the practical purpose of improving corporate performance. Many of the participants reported that the structure was effective in reality and their excitement to participate in the transition was a source of motivation. This chapter presents the author’s conclusions and implications for theory, research, and practice. The propositions are

explained below and then listed further below in the next section.

LIMs, as structures, are required for the coordination and enhancement of cross-business collaboration in an evolving synergistic growth environment (P1). P1 references proposition 1 described in the contributions to theory list in the next section. For example, division leaders benefit from access to meaningful and relevant tacit knowledge and domain experience that can be used to accelerate growth-oriented decision making (P2). However, decentralized collaboration includes business unit autonomy in selecting and implementing growth initiatives, both of which are directly related to growth realization (P3). Strong integrative mechanisms applied appropriately and with the right frequency are positively related to continuous growth realization (P4).

Focused action helps a multi-unit firm realize growth synergies. In fact, the right sequence of tasks, quickly discovered and effectively executed, can lead to mutual benefit between business units that collaborate (P5). Execution is supported by the structure of the division augmented by LIMs. The division is a nimble organizational construct that can effectively exploit focused action to realize synergistic profitability (P6). Furthermore, an organization is intrinsically aligned, as the structure is connected and tasks are shared by relevant functions needed to achieve growth synergies (P7). To illustrate, an organization can drive synergistic-focused action that, when exploited, can realize scaling that includes expansion, consolidation, and integration of business units (P8). An organization can be leveraged to support cost mitigation through a continuously evolving organizational effectiveness that is superior to competitors (P9). LIMs augment the division’s ability to realize synergistic growth by focusing action execution through collaborative task monitoring mechanisms (P10). For example, the ERP system, a significantly influential LIM, is a super-additive because it enables scalable organizational efficacy by promoting cost effectiveness, transparency, and workflow control (P11). Another similar LIM example would be the tools enable the global production network to dynamically scale capacity as measure by the successful completion of variable volume throughput rates as a competitive advantage (P12).

Contributions to Theory

The primary contribution of this article is new empirical insights about the effects of LIMs on growth realization in an MNE. These results are, therefore, relevant to the achievement of sustained profitability and competitive advantage by focusing a multi-unit firm on business unit relatedness and strategic complementarity. The propositions that were extracted from the co-researchers instigated by a precipitated event are listed below:

“Growth Realization through Lateral Integrative Mechanisms”

1. Collaborative intent: An effective self-interest policy is an LIM that encourages a collaborative social environment necessary for profitable growth realization.
2. Formal structures: Formal structures are required for the coordination and enhancement of cross-business collaboration in an evolving synergistic growth environment.
3. Cultural mechanisms: Socio-cultural activities help organizational dimensions establish and mature a collaborative mindset in a complex environment.
4. System sharing: Division leaders benefit from access to meaningful and relevant tacit knowledge and domain experience that can be used to accelerate growth oriented decision making.
5. Decentralized collaboration: Decentralized collaboration includes business unit autonomy in selecting and implementing growth initiatives both of which are directly related to growth realization.
6. Mechanism strength: Strong integrative mechanisms applied appropriately and with the right frequency are positively related to continuous growth realization.
7. Reaction speed: Performance reports are snapshots in time that are a delayed rather than an instantaneous means by which a reaction can ensue.
8. Integrating relationships: The ability to timely mitigate undesirable drift is enabled by relationships built on trust and accountability.
9. Nimble construct: The division has a nimble organizational construct that can effectively exploit focused action to realize synergistic profitability.
10. Mutual profitability: A sequence of tasks, quickly discovered and effectively executed, can lead to mutual benefit between business units that collaborate.
11. Economized energy: Energy consumption, aligned to realize a local synergistic opportunity, is minimized in an organization augmented by LIM's and supported by the corporate center.
12. Intrinsically aligned: An organization is intrinsically aligned as the structure is connected and tasks are shared by relevant functions needed to achieve growth synergies.
13. Scalable synergy: An organization can drive synergistic focused action that, when exploited, can realize scaling that includes expansion, consolidation, and the integration of business units.
14. Evolving mitigation: An organization can be leveraged to support cost mitigation through a continuously evolving organizational effectiveness that is superior to that of competitors.
15. Inspirational finance: Finance, as a supporting function, augments the self-interest in an organization by promoting performance transparency and inspirational reward systems.
16. Monitoring mechanisms: LIM's augment the organizations ability to realize synergistic growth by focusing action execution through collaborative task monitoring mechanisms.
17. Super system: The ERP system, a significantly influential LIM, is a super-additive as it enables scalable organizational efficacy by promoting cost effectiveness, transparency, and workflow control.
18. Corporate resource: The corporate center provides relevant information needed to exploit resources effectively in fulfillment of MNE strategic objectives.
19. Dynamic scaling: Dynamically scaling capacity in a global production network allows for the successful completion of bulk work over a short duration as a competitive advantage.

Limitations and Future Research

The author attempted to develop generalizable theoretical findings based on the empirical results of a case study. Even so, this study encountered several limitations concerning theory and empirical study. The limitations were as follows:

1. There are some weaknesses regarding the generalizability of the findings. The single case study approach was based on approximately twenty in-depth interviews. Given that the phenomenon under investigation is novel and complex, this methodological choice seems reasonable. The research method mandates that in-depth observation is required for collecting and analyzing the resultant holistic data (Eisenhardt, 1989; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Siggelkow 2007; Yin, 1994). The choice of a phenomenological case study using a qualitative approach is affirmed; however, the generalizability of results is not exact due to the context of the case. The context is defined as a moderately dynamic environment, a large size organization with a multi-national organizational structure, and a business with a relatively low degree of relatedness within a vertically integrated value chain. Other firm-specific factors, such as company history, may influence the exactness of the generalizations. The author understands that comparative case studies within similar contexts would help better ground evolving theories.

2. A single case study approach does not make it possible to determine the significance and weighting of drivers for the realization of sustainable growth. Drivers may occur in unique situations relevant to the single case study; however, they may not be relevant in general. Consequently, their general relevance may not be understood. This includes the relative importance of strategic actions and organizational design factors.

3. The research was limited by subjective interpretations of the data. This led to various theoretical

constructs from qualitative information provided by participants. Subjective biases are reduced through the review of the coding process (Yin, 1994), using key informants for validating results (Mayring, 1996), and by following data analysis (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, 1996). Even so, this research still has associated risk due to potential subjective and invalid interpretations of quotations.

4. Several meaningful metrics, from preexisting company data, were used to assess the extent to which growth was successfully realized. Metrics such as average changes in interview ratings, job descriptions, qualitative assessments validating performance, and financial results over a time span of ten months were among the preexisting data that was used. While this is a short period for the assessment of sustained growth synergies, the author feels that this is adequate given the speed of the change driven by the transition from an M-form design to a multi-dimensional design. Additionally, this data was augmented and validated by interview data that was collected over approximately sixty days and which related to the experiences of the stakeholders who went through the transition. In the event that a longer period of time would have been used for the investigation, other important success factors may have emerged. Unfortunately, a longer-term observation period was beyond the time scope allotted to this study and this additional data would likely have produced little additional value.

5. While this research design is holistic and multi-faceted, there were some limitations with regard to theory building. The nature of phenomena under investigation is complex as it includes strategic focused action, organizational design, and corporate management. As a result, the development of a complete and fulsome theory is constrained (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Given that reality based phenomena tends to be complicated, it follows that this study can only offer a mid-range theory of continuous growth realization while developing thought-provoking and new perspectives that may inspire creative theorizing in the future.

6. Finally, the selection of variables may be incomplete. While the analysis is focused on MNE factors of growth realization, like strategy and organizational design, other factors like leadership efficacy, human resource inspiration, and the embedding of human networks were generally neglected. These factors at the initiative level and personal level may impact successful cross-business unit collaboration (Martin, 2002; Martin & Eisenhardt, 2010) and, consequently, on the sustainable realization of growth synergies. As a result, the author suggests that further research is required for developing a more holistic theory on realizing sustainable growth synergies.

The author anticipates that these propositions will stimulate further research as organizational behavior is significantly complex and situational. These observations

are meant to stimulate further thinking. By studying the distinctive features of LIMs, the author hopes that interest has been sparked on research the design and application of LIMs further.

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