



AIUB

Office of
Research and Publications

Uncertain time calls for agile management and adaptation of contingency plan: Lessons from HEIs in Bangladesh

Mohammad Rafiqul Islam Talukdar

AIUB Journal of Business and Economics

Volume: 17 Issue Number: 2 ISSN (Online): 2706-7076

December 2020

Citation

Talukdar, M.R.I. (2020). Uncertain time calls for agile management and adaptation of contingency plan: Lessons from HEIs in Bangladesh. *AIUB Journal of Business and Economics (AJBE)*, 17(2), 219-238.



Copyright © 2020

American International University-Bangladesh

AIUB Journal of Business and Economics

Volume 17, Issue 2

ISSN (PRINT) 1683-8742

ISSN (ONLINE) 2706-7076

December 2020 pp. 219-238

Uncertain time calls for agile management and adaptation of contingency plan: Lessons from HEIs in Bangladesh

*Mohammad Rafiqul Islam Talukdar**

American International University-Bangladesh (AIUB), Dhaka-Bangladesh

***Corresponding author:** DR. MOHAMMAD RAFIQL ISLAM TALUKDAR
Email: rafiqul.islam@aiub.edu

Uncertain time calls for agile management and adaptation of contingency plan: Lessons from HEIs in Bangladesh

Abstract

The context of the future world is more likely to be globally driven, technologically allied, and economically adaptable, but demographically diverse and disruptive with contingency factors. Agile, strategic, and contingency plan-driven management, business innovation, and impact-leadership would be dominant factors in the social, economic, and organizational development of the new normal world. Organizational competence to tailor-made adjustment with an emerging complex environment and evolving business situation is likely to emerge as the new leading-edge competitive advantage. In the COVID-19 situation, amongst the higher education institutions (HEIs) in Bangladesh which had a robust contingency plan, technological soundness, and agile management, they adapted to the pandemic situation quickly and succeeded with a new business model and strategy. Such an evolving and disruptive world order in the increased globalized planet, organizational structure and model fitness, strong networking, collaboration and partnership, controlled external resource dependence, and survival with vigor are central to the success of the strategic management and impact leadership. The research has followed content analysis and focused synthesis methods. While it seems that the management of higher education institutions is supposed to be agile and resilient, and built on sound information communication technology and sturdy contingency plans, these are not widely evident in the case of Bangladesh. But the relevance of the open system organizational theories is evident, and these get strategic considerations in organizational management of HEIs in Bangladesh.

Keywords: Agile-management, contingency-plan, COVID-19, open-system, organizational-theories.

1. Introduction

The world continued to be highly disruptive since the World Trade Center bombing in 2001. Continued disruption of the world forced the 21st-century institutions to be open-system focused, resilient, and adaptive with environmental concerns. Institutions are being disrupted in diverse ways in today's world. Organizations or institutions in disruption may require developing new business models, dynamic strategies, and competitive advantages that evolve from the sturdy contingency plans, and agile and innovation-driven strategic management and leadership.

In a novel coronavirus pandemic situation, education institutions become a high-risk site for the spread of the virus as students used to behave with closeness in school, college, and university campuses in Bangladesh and elsewhere. University students in this era around the globe including Bangladesh are supposed to be techno-friendly. Liveliness, flexibility, and resiliency have become essential aptitudes for them to succeed. In such a context, the management of higher education institutions (HEIs) is thought to be agile, resilient and contingency plan backed, while their organizational structure is alleged to be fit and relevant, as well as built on encyclopedic information communication technology and cooperative network exertions.

The study has focused on how a resilient contingency plan and agile management of HEIs in Bangladesh through adapting to the new business model and strategy can be responsive to face emergency as well as the pandemic situation in a world of changing environment, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic situation.

The scope of the study is limiting to examine the theoretical relevance of the open system organizational theories - particularly the structural contingency, resource dependence, inter-organizational relationships, and population ecology theories – for HEIs in Bangladesh to comprehend the environmental influences and to fade the external disruption and challenges.

Following this introduction, the paper has addressed the study method, and understanding about the agile management and contingency plan, and open system organizations, followed by the perspectives of modern organizations and theoretical frames. Then the article has justified the theoretical relevance in connection to the analysis of how uncertain time calls for agile management and adaptation of contingency plan with lessons and evidence from HEIs in Bangladesh during the COVID-19 pandemic situation. The article ends with a definitive conclusion.

2. Study method

The study has followed content analysis and focused synthesis methods for assessing the sturdiness of the contingency plan of higher education institutions (HEIs) in Bangladesh, as well as the agility and resilience of the management of HEIs in Bangladesh in response to the call for the development of a new strategic business model to face the COVID-19 pandemic situation.

Content analysis is a study method used to classify the patterns, trends, and configurations, and implied meaning and implications of the “selected contents” used in documented communications. It requires the systematic collection of information and data from a set of contents, which can be verbal (i.e., oral and/or written) or non-verbal (i.e., image, signs, symbols, visualized expressions, or body languages).

Focused synthesis denotes collecting and documenting information and data from a range of sources including published and unpublished documents of the study entities, staff memorandum, and consultation with key stakeholders (Talukdar, 2012). The research was designed in July 2020. Relevant contents, information, and data were collected in August-September 2020, while the paper was written in September 2020.

3. Agile management and contingency plan

The pitfalls of the traditional organizational management and leadership methods include the lack of autonomy, flexibility, and adaptability that has made institutions or organizations more difficult to respond to change and to incorporate their evolving lessons as they work through. The agile management along with strategic contingency plan-support could be a solution in this regard, particularly in a rampant disruption and pandemic environment. According to Nahia Orduna in Inam (2020):

“Agile is a mindset that empowers organizations and employees by creating high performing teams. The key benefits of the agile way of working have been recognized as increased customer satisfaction, faster time to market, greater innovation, and increased employee engagement. It was originally focused on software development, but has now been proven to benefit teams across organizations.”

Furthermore in response to Henna Inam’s concern – “Many of us are working virtually now. What are the areas where we can apply agile leadership to virtual environments?” - Nahia Orduna, Senior Manager in Analytics and Digital Integration at Vodafone, replied:

“I would recommend you start with these four areas to lead in an agile virtual environment: create a safe environment to fail and learn fast, use collaboration tools, encourage continuous feedback, and deepen your relationships. Agile leadership leads to a clear direction while enabling teams to adapt to changes: Be its organizational changes, internal team changes, or emerging industry trends. In uncertain times, it is more relevant than ever. I have been leading an agile team virtually for almost two years, and we have learned so much. This approach can benefit small businesses up to the CEO of a multinational organization” (Inam, 2020).

Analysis of the italic contents above reveals the fact that agile management is an iterative change management approach that values talents or human capitals, process communications and feedbacks, collaboration tools, adaptation to change, flexibility and resilience, delegation and autonomy, safe environment to fail and learn fast as well as innovation leadership, and producing working results. Precisely it is a mindset and iterative approach, most suitable in modern open system organizations and evolving business situations as well as in turbulence environments. Notwithstanding it is better to go along with the adaptation of a contingency plan to face a tough and evolving situation like the COVID-19 pandemic. Figure 1 below shows the difference between “Agile” and “Not Agile” in project management.

Agile	Not Agile
Value individuals and interactions	Value processes and tools
Value working software	Value comprehensive documentation
Value customer collaboration	Value contract negotiation
Value responding to change	Value following a plan

Figure 1: “Agile” and “Not Agile” in project management

Source: Conrad, 2019

According to Margaret Rouse, a contingency plan is a strategy designed to help an organization respond effectively to a major future event or catastrophic circumstances that may or may not take place. It is also considered as "Plan B" because it could be also used as an alternative strategy if the situation diverged from the normal (Rouse, 2015).

Scrutiny of Rouse's viewpoint exposes that a contingency plan is supposed to be an integral part of business stability, and tackling emergency or pandemic situations, as well as risk mitigation and crisis management of an organization or institution. It is often deliberated by both public and private sectors, even by higher education institutions, especially by private universities. During a crisis or pandemic time, the customized adaptation of contingency plans of institutions is often operationalized in response to the emergence of new business models and strategies. To face the evolving critical situation, further to the adaptation of the contingency plan of an institution to shape the new business model and strategy, an efficient agile management approach is a must to follow.

4. Organization as an open system

An open system is a system that recurrently exchanges feedbacks with its internal and external environments. As a system, the open system emphasizes the input-process-output mechanism to meet the goals along with keeping the review and learning process. Critically important aspects of an open system are "boundaries", "external environment" and "equifinality" (McNamara, 2006).

An organization as an open system constantly exchanges feedbacks with its internal and external environments and analyzes those feedbacks to adjust to the internal system to achieve its system goals. As per the study of organizational theory concerns, an organization can be either open or closed system-oriented. Unlike the closed system, an open system has to deal with both the inside and outside stakeholders and environments including internal shareholders, professionals, customers, competitors, budgetary economy, and political, economic, ecological, and technological factors, and health, security, and societal aspects.

In the discussion on open system origins, Baum and Rowley (2002:6) emphasize the relationships and interdependencies between the organizations and environments:

"Open systems models conceive organizations as both systems of internal relationships and as inhabitants of a larger system encompassing the environments in which they operate and on which they depend for resources. Organizations are conceived of as a throughput model, obtaining resources from the environment, processing them, and distributing the output back to the environment."

Figure 2 below displays three critically important aspects of an open system.

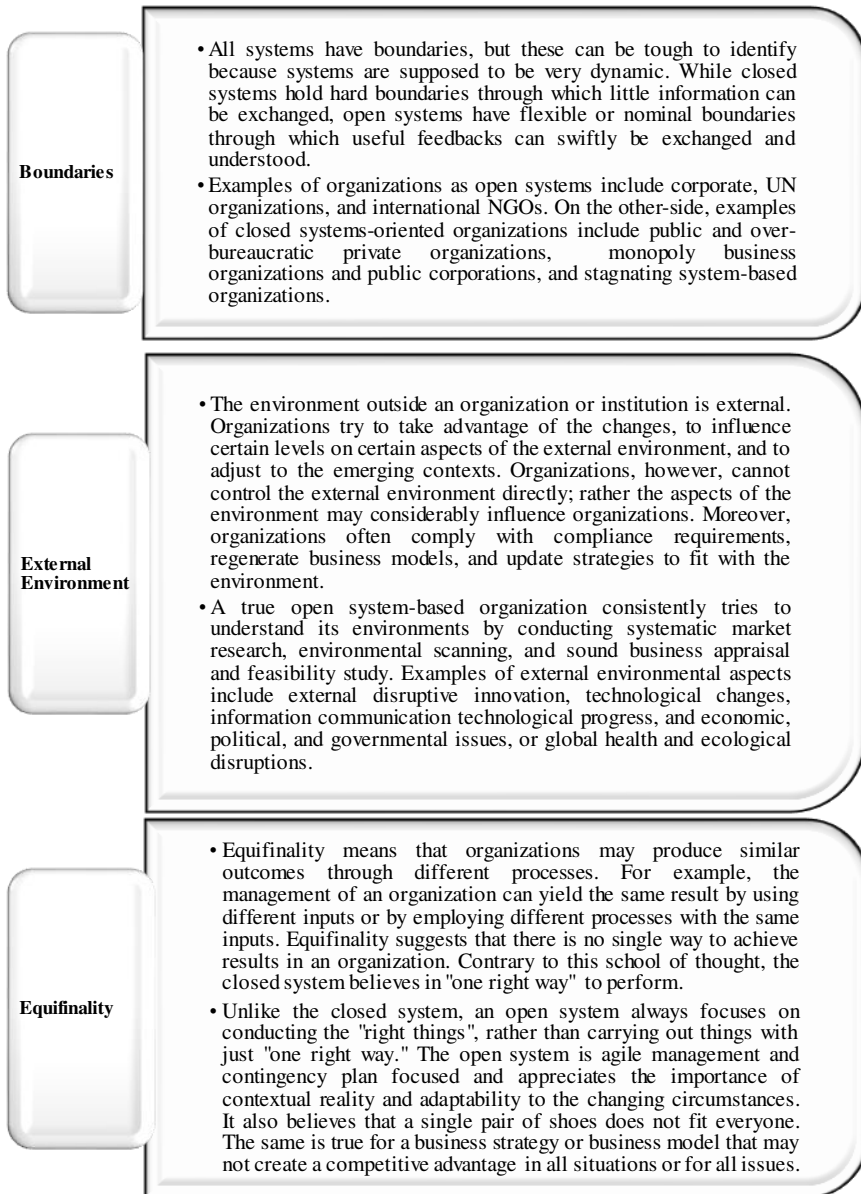


Figure 2: Three critical aspects of an open system

4.1 Theoretical perspectives of modern organizations

Organization as an open system has evolved from the rational and natural system perspectives. Jofre (2011) argues that in both rational and natural viewpoints, organizations and their environments are two distinct elements of the system. They are detached by well-defined boundaries. In the third view - i.e., the open system approach - such boundaries become insignificant or less evident. Table 1 shows the different perspectives on organizational management and development concerning the rational, natural, rational-natural, and open system approaches.

Table 1: Perspectives of modern organizations

Perspectives to modern organizational management and development			
Paradigm 1: Very Limited Open System	Paradigm 2: Limited Open System	Paradigm 3: Tending-to Open System	Paradigm 4: Open System
Rational Approach	Natural Approach	Rational-Natural Approach	Open System Approach
<u>Perspectives</u>	<u>Perspectives</u>	<u>Perspectives</u>	<u>Perspectives</u>
Economics	Institutions and isomorphism	Cognition and interpretation	Intra-relationship of organization and interrelationships between organizations, and collaboration, partnerships, and networks
Cost-effectiveness	Collective resources and networks	Power and dependence	A balanced view of cost, innovation and leadership differentiation management, and sustained competitive advantage
Incrementalism	Ecology and evolution	Complexity, compulsion, and structural contingent	Sustainability and impact leadership
		Learning and knowledge building	Interdependencies between the organizations and environments, structural contingent to environments, and environmental uncertainty
		Innovation and technology enabling	Contingency factors and plan, agile management and leadership, and the emergence of a new business model
		Leadership and culture of commitment, and leadership differentiation and competitive advantage	Disruptive innovation and information communication technology enabling
			Transparency, stakeholder participation and inclusiveness, and access to information and data
			Social constructivism, and knowledge-based view of the firm and learning organizations

Modern organizational perspectives shown in table1 evolved through different paradigms since organizations considered their interactions and dependences on environments as the determination of organizational management and development. Notably, paradigm 4, open system perspectives are still being evolved. As far as the open system is concerned, "the best way to organize depends on the nature of the environment to which the organization relates" (Scott, 1992: 89). Figure 3 below shows how different paradigm-driven perspectives on organizational management and development lead to generating diverse theoretical frames.

<p style="text-align: center;">Paradigm 1</p> <p style="text-align: center;">RATIONAL AND VERY LIMITED OPEN SYSTEM THEORIES</p> <p>Rational actor model, bounded rationality, and incrementalism in public decision making, and cost advantage, budgetary incrementalism, and descriptive budgetary theories</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Paradigm 2</p> <p style="text-align: center;">NATURAL AND EARLY STAGED OPEN SYSTEM THEORIES</p> <p>New institutional, limited resource dependence, and population ecology theories</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Paradigm 3</p> <p style="text-align: center;">RATIONAL-NATURAL AND OPEN SYSTEM THEORIES</p> <p>Structural contingency, organizational learning and innovation, and behavioral and situational style leadership, and competitive advantage theories</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Paradigm 4</p> <p style="text-align: center;">OPEN SYSTEM THEORIES</p> <p>Inter-organizational relationships, resource dependence, structural contingency, population ecology, organizational learning and adaptation to disruptive innovation and disruptive environment, sustainable development and impact-leadership, sustained competitive advantage, inclusive governance, the social construction of knowledge, organizational knowledge-based view and learning organizations, and normative budgetary theories</p>

Figure 3: Theoretical frames on different perspectives

Open system theories evolved from the different perspectives of modern organizational management and development. Paradigm 1 yielded rational and very limited open system theories that mean a rational approach allowed organizations to interact with environments with very limited scope and scale. Paradigm 2 generated natural and early staged open system theories when organizations truly realized the impotence of natural and environmental influences on organizations.

Paradigm 3 produced rational-natural and open system theories when organizations truly started to employ open system outfits considering the evolving complexities and dynamic nature of organizational aspects and management. Paradigm 4 engendered fully-fledged open system theories when organizations became truly open, transparent, participatory, inclusive, and cooperative and knowledge based on one-hand, and agile management and contingency plan-driven, as well as responsive to disruptive environments on the other hand.

4.2 Theoretical relevance

Global contingency factorial disruption continued to increase since 2001. It led the 21st-century organizations to be resilient and adaptive with the environmental concerns keeping the open system organizational theoretical locus, especially the structural contingency, resource dependence, inter-organizational relationships, and population ecology theories, in front. The study appreciates the importance of environmental concerns and external resource dependence, interconnectedness and cooperation, and survival and continued healthy existence of organizations. How and to what extent a robust contingency plan and agile management can be responsive to encounter and overcome emergency or pandemic situations in a world of changing environments and evolving business climates are principal implications of theoretical aspects of the study.

Talukdar (2019) observes the facts that before the late 1960s, the most organizational or institutional analysis was concerned about the internal workings of organizations or institutions, except some works of the old institutional school, for example, Selznick (1949), Gouldner (1954) and Zald (1970). Those marked the organizational ties with their environments on a limited scale. From the late 1960s to 1970s and onward, mainstream organizational theories relating to the external environment, such as “new institutional theory”, “structural contingency theory”, “resource dependence theory”, “population ecology theory”, and “inter-organizational relationships theory” evolved.

According to Talukdar (2019):

“A dominant approach in the late 1960s, influenced by, Thompson (1967) and Lawrence and Lorsch (1967), known as ‘structural contingency theory’, was first clearly concerned about organizations’ interactions with their environments. Then in the 1970s and onward organizations’ relations with their environments turned out to be a major focus of the study. Such works included Williamson’s (1975) book on ‘transaction-cost economics’, Hannan

and Freeman's (1977) article on 'the population ecology of organizations', and Pfeffer and Salancik's (1978) book on 'organization's resource dependence on external environments, and the new institutional theory', followed by Meyer and Rowan's (1977) article on 'organizations as myth and ceremony' that was further influenced by DiMaggio and Powell's (1983) essay on 'institutional isomorphism'. The 'inter-organizational relationships theory' also grew simultaneously, and continued to evolve until the early 21st century. This theory was mainly influenced by the 'transaction costs economics theory' (Williamson, 1975), the 'agency theory' (Eisenhardt, 1989), and the 'resource dependence theory' (Pfeffer and Salancik, 1978 and 2003). The 'inter-organizational relationships' termed further as 'partnership', 'alliance', 'collaboration', 'networks', and 'inter-organizational relations' (Baker et al., 2011)."

Tables 2 below shows the basic assumptions, and key research questions of the structural contingency, resource dependence, inter-organizational relationships, and population ecology theories that are being assessed in this paper to test and justify the relevance of those at higher education institutions in Bangladesh in the context of uncertain times, especially in COVID-19 pandemic situation.

Table 2: Assumptions and key research questions of the open-system org theories

Theories	Assumptions	Key research questions
<i>Structural contingency theory</i>	<p>"No one best way to organize. Any way of organizing is not equally effective. The best way to organize is contingent on the environment (Galbraith, 1973)."</p> <p>Organizations adjust their structure to fit the context. Organizations are open systems.</p> <p>Decision-makers tend to be rational, efficiency-oriented.</p>	<p>Whether an organization's structure/design fit or misfit within the environment it works in?</p> <p>How to know whether an organization's structure/design fit or not?</p> <p>Why and how do organizations move from misfit to equilibrium?</p>
<i>Resource dependence theory</i>	<p>Pfeffer's assumptions (Pfeffer, 1982): "Organizations are not internally self-sufficient. They require resources from the environment and thus become interdependent with those elements of the environment with which they transact. A looser coupling between organizations and their environments is evident. Also, interconnectedness, scarce resources, and competing demands are evident."</p>	<p>How do organizations reduce environmental interdependence and uncertainty?</p> <p>Why and how do organizations drive to control over resources needed and to maximize autonomy and legitimacy?</p> <p>How do organizations grow the ability to adapt given the fact of environmental constraints?</p> <p>How do organizations determine the preferred choice of behavior?</p>

	<p>Oliver's assumptions (Oliver, 1991): <i>“Organizational choice is constrained by multiple external pressures. Organizational environments are collective and interconnected. Organizational survival depends on responsiveness to external demands and expectations. Organizations seek stability and predictability. Organizations seek legitimacy. Organizations are interest-driven.”</i></p>	
<p><i>Inter-organizational relationships theory</i></p>	<p>Organizations are considered as open and adaptive systems.</p> <p>Systems theory is pivotal in understanding inter-organizational relationships.</p> <p>Organizations make conscious and intentional decisions. Homogeneity of perception and orientation among network members is evident.</p> <p>Particular resources are seen as equally important by network members.</p>	<p>Why and how do inter-organizational relationships evolve?</p> <p>Based on the principles of rational as well as functional model, how do organizations deal with each other to reduce dependence on the environment and maximize their outcome from the common resources, and to establish systematic control over the external environment?</p>
<p><i>Population ecology theory</i></p>	<p>Organizations and environments are tightly coupled.</p> <p>The processes of change are ultimately controlled by the environment.</p> <p>Environments are dynamic and uncertain.</p> <p>Organizations are characterized by relative inertia in structure.</p> <p>Populations have a unitary character.</p>	<p>Why are there so many (or a few) kinds of organizations?</p> <p>How do social conditions affect the rates at which new organizations and new organizational forms arise, organization change forms, and organizations and organizational forms die out?</p> <p>What are the aspects of organizational diversity, founding rate, mortality, organizational change, and natural selection?</p>

Amongst the relevant four open system organizational theories used in this study, presented in table 2 above, "population ecology theory" seems to be a dominant one. 'Survival of the fittest' to the world, an old theoretical proposition, was published by Darwin (1859) in his book "On the origin of species". Furthermore, aspects of diversity, founding rate, mortality, change, and natural selection of organizations depend on the environmental conditionality and contingency factors, which are coupled with the organizational theory "population ecology", first instigated by Hannan and Freeman (1977) in their influential article titled "The population ecology of organizations".

Figure 4 reveals how population ecology theory has evolved through different paradigms.

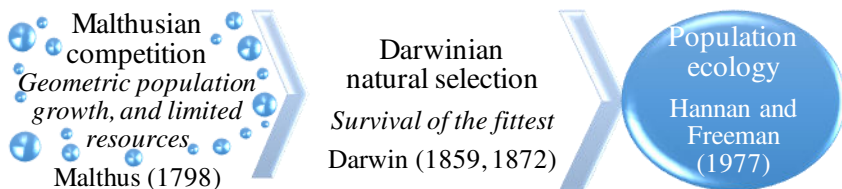


Figure 4: Evolution of population ecology theory

Figure 4 has shown how a 222-year age-old Malthusian "competition", leading to 161-year old Darwinian "natural selection" led the 43 years back open system organizational theory "population ecology", which has now become tightly relevant in 2020 onset, as novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has created a long lasted serious disorder and devastation in the world.

5. Uncertain time and HEIs in Bangladesh

Why and how a robust contingency plan is important for a higher education institution (HEI) in Bangladesh? To what extent a resilient contingency plan and agile management of an HEI can help encounter this pandemic situation and overcome the challenges in such a changing environment and evolving business climate? These two concerns seem to lead to a principal implication of the theoretical aspects of the study. How an uncertain time calls for agile management and adaptation of the contingency plan is being discussed in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic with lessons and evidence from the higher education institutions in Bangladesh.

Higher education institutions (HEIs) today in Bangladesh and elsewhere must be resilient and adaptive to environmental concerns. HEIs in Bangladesh need to appreciate inevitably the importance of organizational structure and business model fitness, external resource dependence, interconnectedness, and cooperation. For an emergency like the novel coronavirus epidemic context, the survival and continued healthy existence of higher education institutions in Bangladesh become a salient issue. Thus, the open system organizational theories, especially the structural contingency, resource dependence, inter-organizational relationships, and population ecology theories, are highly relevant for HEIs in the case of Bangladesh.

Evidence from contents analysis of some purposively selected universities in Bangladesh reveals that those who had a solid contingency plan and agile management style, immediately responded to the emerging business model, and adapted quickly to the context-specific requirements, and appreciated the new model with tailor-made focus and strategy.

Besides, cross-sectional content analysis discloses the fact that compared to the private universities, the public universities in Bangladesh responded very poorly in this regard. Even the best performing public universities in Bangladesh were reluctant to create a competitive advantage from the changing environment. They just closed down the university for a long time and remained quiet with the uncertainty in such an unexpected situation.

Public universities in Bangladesh have tried to adopt the new business model framework too lately, and very recently from the mid of the summer semester of 2020. Yet they are in the embryonic stage and trying to finish the overdue spring semester. This is simply because of the absence of the comprehensive contingency plan and agile management approach of the public universities in Bangladesh.

The same is to a great extent true for some mushroomed private universities, the population of which was grown in favorable time without a strong contingency back up. But now in a tough time, many of them are facing survival concerns given the principle of population ecology theory.

The pandemic situation also proves the relevance of some other selected open system organizational theories - i.e., structural contingency, resource dependence, inter-organizational relationship theories. Evidence of resource dependence theory at HEIs, for instance, is found, in Sheets et al.'s (2012) study in the context of the United States of America (USA) and universal, which is equally appropriate in the context of Bangladesh. According to Sheets et al. (2012:8), in addressing students' apprehension relating to launching a successful career, universities conventionally add a value proposition that includes shaping what a student necessities to learn and feels confident to do for a prosperous career inauguration in a preferred field; evaluating students' aptitudes, and providing numerous types of credentialing that hold market value; connecting students with companies, for instance, through internships and job placements.

Analysis of the aforementioned content and evidence from Sheets et al. (2012:8) exposes that those students' apprehensions get importance to the universities, particularly to the private universities in Bangladesh, because such higher education institutions are profoundly dependent on the revenue resource comes from the students. Moreover, the relevance of structural

contingency theory at HEIs is evident again in Sheets et al. (2012:9) which is fully relevant in the case of Bangladesh as well:

“Many of the higher education institutions are under considerable pressure to offer a large menu of programs and courses. Yet these institutions find it difficult to acquire the faculty expertise and organizational resources needed to ensure high quality across such a broad range of specialties. One result of this shortcoming is a combination of strong and weak programs. Given their current business models, these institutions face a real dilemma—they can achieve greater economies of scale only by sacrificing economies of scope.”

Analysis of the aforesaid content from Sheets et al. (2012:9) unveils the fact that the higher education institutions globally and in Bangladesh concern for the fitness of organizations’ structures, business models, and designs considering the environments in those work. For example, although a significant amount of pressure is evident to offer a large list of options of programs and courses, considering the real-world difficulty to secure the faculty expertise and institutional resources required to safeguard the quality standard of the programs, the HEIs sacrifice economies of scope to a certain extent and focus on the economies of scale to a great extent. This means HEIs are concerned about the dilemma of the business model’s misfit, and thus they wish to set the equilibrium between the economies of scale and economies of scope in this context.

Finally, the relevance of inter-organizational relationships theory at HEIs in Bangladesh, particularly in this global pandemic situation, is evident in the area of research and knowledge generating. Some leading private universities in Bangladesh are co-creating, building partnerships and establishing collaboration with the international academic community and universities, and jointly conducting series of webinars to share the idea, intellectual resources, to disseminate newly generated knowledge, and to support with redesigned course contents and curriculums, and e-learning resources.

6. Conclusion

Human ingenuity and organizational capability to adapt to the emerging complex environment and the evolving business situation will emerge as the new frontier of competitive advantage. Different global regions and countries may take different trails to achieve their competitive advantages, but the agenda around agile management, contingency strategy backed-up business model, and innovation and impact-focused leadership would be similar.

In this changing competitive landscape, the management and leadership of organizations will broadly become more granular and open system organizational theory-based. Managers need to be more agile, contingency plan-driven, and strategy and business model development focused. The context of the future will be more disruptive, demographically diverse, innovation-focused, technologically connected, economically adaptable, and globally driven. Disruptive innovation, strategic management, and collaborative and impact-leadership will be dominant factors in social, economic, and organizational development.

In the COVID-19 situation, for example, organizations in Bangladesh, particularly higher education institutions which had robust contingency plans, technological soundness, and agile management, they have adapted to the pandemic situation quickly and succeeded with new business models and strategies. In reverse, the absence of such fitness puts many HEIs into the difficulty to adjust quickly in such an evolving and pandemic situation. It makes proved that higher education institutions must be resilient, agile-management oriented, and sturdy contingency plan is driven to be adaptive with the environmental concerns in this increasingly uncertain and disruptive world.

In this study, as the relevance of open system organizational theories, especially the population ecology, inter-organizational relationships, structural contingency, and resource dependence theories, is highly evident at higher education institutions in Bangladesh and to some extent globally, particularly in the disruptive and uncertain world order, HEIs in Bangladesh must hold open system organizational theories under strategic consideration during their planning and organizational development exercises, and business model and strategy development stages. In the case of global HEIs, however, it seems to be beyond the scope of this study to recommend conclusively in this regard. To do this, it requires to do further study in the global context.

Disclaimer

The article followed all ethical standards for research. The author declares that no competing interests exist. Also, the views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author alone and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of any affiliated institution of the author.

References

- Baker, E.; Kan, M.; and Teo, S. T. T. (2011). Developing a collaborative network organization: leadership challenges at multiple levels. *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, 24(6), 853-875. <https://doi.org/10.1108/09534811111175797>
- Baum, J. A. C.; and Rowley, T. J. (2002). Companion to Organizations: An Introduction. In: Baum, J A. C. (Ed.). *The Blackwell Companion to Organizations*, First Edition. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd.
- Conrad, A. (2019). Project Management: What Exactly Is Agile? A Definition of Agile Project Management. *Blogs Capterra*, Published on November 18, 2019, Retrieved on September 27, 2020. <https://blog.capterra.com/definition-of-agile-project-management/#:~:text=%20The%20definition%20of%20Agile%20p,roject%20management%20,all%20about%20efficient%20communi,cation%20over%20documentation%2C...%20More%20>
- Darwin, C. (1959). *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life*. London: John Murray (24 November 1859).
- Darwin, C. (1872). *The origin of species by means of natural selection, or the preservation of favored races in the struggle for life*. Sixth Edition. [This edition is commonly known as “The Origin of Species”. The 6th is considered as Darwin’s final edition; there were minor modifications in certain subsequent issues.]
- DiMaggio, P. J.; and Powell, W.W. (1983). The iron cage revisited: Institutional isomorphism and collective rationality in organizational fields. *American Sociological Review*, 48: 147- 160.
- Eisenhardt, K. M. (1989). Agency theory: An assessment and review. *Academy of Management Review*, 14(1), 57–74.
- Galbraith, J. (1973). *Designing Complex Organizations*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- Gouldner, A. W. (1954). *Patterns of Industrial Bureaucracy*. Illinois: Free Press.
- Hannan, M. T.; and Freeman, J. H. (1977). The population ecology of organizations. *American Journal of Sociology*, 82: 929-964.

- Inam, H. (2020). *Four Ways To Be An Agile Leader In Virtual Environments*. Posted online on April 4, 2020, Retrieved on September 27, 2020. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/hennainam/2020/04/04/four-ways-to-be-an-agile-leader-in-virtual-environments/#5cdfdf3f17db>
- Jofre, S. (2011). *Strategic Management: The theory and practice of strategy in (business) organizations*. DTU Management (DTU Management 2011, No. 1). Downloaded from orbit.dtu.dk on Sep 18, 2020.
- Lawrence, P. R.; and Lorsch, J. W. (1967). *Organization and Environment*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Malthus, T. (1798). *An essay on the principle of population as it affects the future improvement of society, commonly known as "An essay on the principle of population"*, published anonymously. London: John Murray. [Second book on the issue with sociological lens and political philosophy, published in 1803, followed by several editions and in 1830 he published a third work on the issue entitled: "A summary view of the principle of population."]
- McNamara, C. (2006). *Field Guide to Consulting and Organizational Development: A Collaborative and Systems Approach to Performance, Change, and Learning*. Minnesota: Authenticity Consulting, LLC.
- Meyer, J. W.; and Rowan, B. (1977). Institutionalized organizations: Formal structure as myth and ceremony. *American Journal of Sociology*, 83: 340-363.
- Oliver, C. (1991). Strategic responses to institutional processes. *Academy of Management Review*, 16, 145-179.
- Pfeffer, J.; and Salancik, G.R. (1978). *The External Control of Organizations: A Resource Dependence Perspective*. New York: Harper and Row.
- Pfeffer, J. (1982). Organizations and organization theory, the University of Wisconsin – Madison citation networks. *Organization Studies*, 16: 503-526.

- Pfeffer, J.; and Salancik, G. R. (2003). *The external control of organizations: A resource dependence perspective*. California: Stanford University Press.
- Rouse, M. (2015). Contingency plan. *WhatIs.com*, Updated in September 2015, Retrieved on September 27, 2020. <https://whatis.techtarget.com/definition/contingency-plan>
- Scott, W.R. (1992). *Organizations: Rational, Natural, and Open Systems*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall.
- Selznick, P. (1949). *TVA and the Grass Roots*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Sheets, R.; Crawford, S.; and Soares, L. (2012). Rethinking Higher Education Business Models – Steps Toward a Disruptive Innovation Approach to Understanding and Improving Higher Education Outcomes. *EDUCATION, POSTSECONDARY, Center for American Progress*. Posted on March 28, 2012, Retrieved on September 21, 2020. <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/education-postsecondary/reports/2012/03/28/11250/rethinking-higher-education-business-models/>
- Talukdar, M.R.I. (2012). Mobile Communications and Fighting Corruption In Kumar, V.; and Svensson, J. (eds.) *Proceedings of M4D 2012*, Karlstad: Karlstad University Studies.
- Talukdar, M. R. I. (2019). Autonomy in Budgeting Decisions of Local Government Union Councils: A Study of Bangladesh. *Journal of Public Administration and Governance*, 9(2), 30-70. <https://doi.org/10.5296/jpag.v9i2.14773>
- Thompson, J. D. (1967). *Organizations in Action*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Williamson, O. E. (1975). *Markets and Hierarchies: Analysis and Antitrust Implications*. New York: Free Press.
- Zald, M. N. (1970). *Organizational Change: The Political Economy of the YMCA*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

This page intentionally left blank