DECISION-MAKING THEORY

How a multiple perspective approach can generate workplace strategies

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1 Background

The term ‘decision-making’ comes from the public administration domain and was transferred into the business world in the mid-20th century (Buchanan & O’Connell, 2006). Decision-making has been studied in multiple disciplines, including mathematics, sociology, psychology, biology, economics and political science. The disciplines that are particularly relevant to workplace are business management and organisational behaviour.

In managerial decision-making, there are predominantly two opposing views that can be also referred to as generations. The first generation assumes that humans are gifted with perfect rationality and thus develop normative methods of judgement (Simon, 1977, 1979; Lindblom, 1959) based on quantitative values and utilities (Steele & Stefánsson, 2016; Turpin & Marais, 2004). Although these approaches started with the idea of perfect rationality, soon they embraced also the concept of bounded rationality (Simon, 1955), meaning that there are a number of cognitive agents that influence one’s decisions, including access to information, computational capacity and other environmental conditions. The second, by contrast, recognises the role of individuals’ emotions in any decision process (March, 1988; Pfeffer, 1981; Cohen et al., 1972; Keen and Scott Morton, 1978; Klein, 1998). This latter view proposes descriptive models of judgement, namely qualitative processes of problem-solving and mediation between solutions, that are influenced by the style, background, personality and previous experience of decision makers (Turpin & Marais, 2004). These generations can respectively be considered as hard systems approaches and soft system approaches (see Arkesteijn, 2019 for an in-depth analysis of these concepts and the related rationality).

The multiple perspective approach (MPA) can be considered a major overhaul or an alternative paradigm to conventional views of decision-making (Courtney, 2001). MPA attempts to ‘sweep in’ under an ‘unbounded system thinking’ (Mitroff & Linstone, 1993; Churchman, 1971) all possible perspectives on a problem that can be classified into: technical (T), organisational or societal (O) and personal or individual (P) (Linstone, 1989). This approach suggests that multiple ‘technical’ views of a system should be put together by data collection and scrutiny with analytical models. In addition, the ‘organisational’ and ‘individual’ perspectives should be

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gathered by the involvement of as many stakeholders as possible, and through as many sources as possible. MPA pays special attention to the interdependencies and reciprocal impact of perspectives (Courtney, 2001). Even though MPA is not a univocally codified method, it has been defined as holistic and comprehensive (Turpin et al., 2009), and especially suitable as a general analysis framework for use on ‘messy’ (Checkland, 1984) problems that are characterised by uncertainty and disagreement. This approach defines a set of broad principles, which can serve as a malleable knowledge base and can be translated to different contexts from where such an approach was initially developed.

This chapter describes how MPA would benefit workplace decisions starting from the key principles of Strategic Decision Making (SDM), Stakeholder Approach and Multiple Criteria Decision Analysis (MCDA) applied in managerial contexts, within which MPA is rooted.

1.1 Strategic Decision Making, stakeholder approach and multiple criteria decision analysis

SDM refers to the process of how choices, leading to significant long-term impacts through the commitment of significant resources, are actually effected (Papadakis et al., 1998). SDM offers applicable tools to deliver more accurate long-term decisions, even if they are based only on a series of general assumptions, as the future is somewhat unpredictable. By its general nature, SDM allocates resources – mainly financial – in the present in order to prepare for future returns. SDM considers time frames that are longer than operational or tactical decision-making (see also Chapter 4 on the St. Gallen Management Model). When applied in the built environment context, SDM seems more related to real estate decisions, considering the long-term investments in the building, rather than to the workplace scale where changes happen more frequently (e.g. fit-out, churn, etc.). Also, the criteria based on which to make a choice are often more numerous than value maximisation in financial terms. The existence of various conflicting criteria in different decision-making settings is acknowledged by Multiple Criteria Decision Making or Analysis (MCDM or MCDA), which identifies the decision alternatives, generates and selects solutions, and evaluates the tools designed to support decisions (Fandel & Spronk, 1985) – involving either one or several decision makers. Nevertheless, MCDA seems to be used more as an evaluation method than as a design method, and it often misses proper identification and involvement of stakeholders (Arkesteijn, 2019).

The stakeholder approach, as proposed by Freeman (1984), would overcome these limitations, though not without criticism (Laplume et al., 2008). Stakeholder theory recognises the existence of multiple constituencies but still often regards their interests only in economic-financial terms (Arkesteijn, 2019). Also, stakeholder theory per se does not define principled criteria for decision-making, which means that it lacks the function of creating a single-valued objective as a synthesis for effective decision-making (Jensen, 2010).

These three approaches are combined and advanced in the Multiple Perspective Strategic Decision Making theory that the authors of this chapter propose for application in workplace-related decision contexts.

1.2 Multiple Perspective Strategic Decision Making: key principles and challenges

Multiple Perspective Strategic Decision Making (MPSDM) can be considered as one of the various streams under the general SDM approach. The multiple perspective approach was elaborated between the late 1970s and the 1980s to help system practitioners (see also Chapter 3

on systems thinking) and operation researchers bridge the gap between theoretical analysis and action in the real world (Linstone, 1989). The United States led its first applications in military system decisions, regional development, healthcare planning, education planning, energy forecasting and assessment, and corporate policy decisions.

The use of multiple perspectives, namely the aforementioned T, O and P, is grounded on the fundamental assumptions that: (1) each perspective adds unique insights to the others; and (2) the O and P perspectives help bridge the gap between analysis and action, which are the stages of a decision process that are based mainly on T (Linstone, 1989).

By integrating T, O and P, this approach presents a specific three-dimensional view to address common challenges that are encountered in real-world systems requiring decision-making. While there is no scientific validation of this theory, nor established procedures or formulas, it can be supported by guidelines assisting in the concept's application (Figure 8.1), such as those re-elaborated by Wainfan (2010) for the RAND Corporation – based on Linstone's work – under the definition of Multiple Perspective Strategic Decision Making (MPSDM), as follows:

- 1 Characterising the problem, namely by (a) framing the strategic problem, through appropriate scorecards; and (b) addressing multiple perspectives in the analysis, through the exploration in parallel of objective and 'perspective'/subjective parameters;
- 2 Simplifying the problem at hand, by attributing dimensionality to uncertainties and perspectives in order to create a set of alternatives to be compared and integrated; and
- 3 Formulating strategy from thorough analysis, which encompasses communication and implementation through briefing, by taking into consideration also criteria of flexibility for future adaptations.

As such, MPSDM is based on a number of principles. First, it invites to systematise a vast spectrum of stakes. It is based on the premise that decision makers may never agree on (1) values, or what individuals deem important; (2) beliefs, or the individual mental schemes that explain how the world works; and (3) expectations, or individual's vision about how the future will unfold (Wainfan, 2010). However, it proposes several methods to characterise different stakeholders, consider their perspectives and find an agreed point of contact among them.

Figure 8.1 MPSDM approach (elaboration of the authors from Linstone [1989]) and Wainfan [2010])

Second, this model clearly supports a multidisciplinary and multi-method approach to problem-solving. In fact, the considered Technical (T), Organisational (O) and Personal (P) perspectives rely on different disciplinary areas and inquiring modes in the so called T-O-P Balance (Linstone, 1989). T reflects the rational approach to problem-solving typically applied in science and engineering, where data is analysed in a quantitative way. O and P represent the subjective views of people, namely the individuals or groups (both formal and informal) taking part in the decisions, where information is gathered, for example, through interviews, surveys or other qualitative methods. Ethical and Aesthetic perspectives have been included in further elaborations of the model but have not yet been defined in detail (Turpin et al., 2009).

Third, the approach is iterative and proposes repetitive analysis and group discussion, once some factors have been understood to drive the choice of options (Wainfan, 2010).

Finally, in creating strategy from analysis, this approach demonstrates that strategy does not correspond exclusively to choosing an option, but also to creating paths forward (Wainfan, 2010).

Thanks to these strong conceptual foundations, the multi-perspective strategic decision-making approach appears as a useful support for both workplace management practice and research, as the next section will explain in greater depth. Especially, its emphasis on the different perspectives characterising the actors involved can offer new insights on workplace processes.

2 Applicability to workplace studies

Applying MPSDM's overarching tenets to workplace-related processes is coherent with a general movement that encourages facility management to holistic approaches in performance assessment, added value, workplace change and management (e.g. Bahr et al., 2016; Fleming, 2004; Lavy et al., 2014; Riratanaphong & van Der Voordt, 2015). In effect, the invite is not recent for determining workplace effectiveness, not only in terms of costs per person and financial measures, but also by including user perceptions (Becker, 1990; Tucker & Smith, 2008; Lindholm, 2008; Lindholm & Leväinen, 2006). This recalls the idea of a shift from conceiving organisations as machines to be controlled to thinking of them as communities where people learn from each other (Addleson, 1996).

The need for projecting actions taken in the workplace into more forward-looking strategies is well recognised in the corporate real estate (CRE) and facilities management (FM) literature, and is stated in the European Standard series (RICS, 2013).

In architecture at a building and area level, preference-based design methodologies have been developed to reflect multiple decision makers' preferences (Binnekamp, 2010). Schemes supporting corporate and public real estate decisions have been proposed, for instance for portfolio management (Arkesteijn & Binnekamp, 2014). However, the existing approaches have a strong focus on the development of mathematical models and algorithms and, although attentive in the involvement of stakeholders throughout the whole process, they do not clarify how they selected stakeholders and whether there would potentially be additional groups or individuals to include – they simplify them to very few categories (two to four). Moreover, these approaches are supposed to be applied in the final decision stage and on an established range of choices (either portfolio compositions or design solutions) rather than to generate shared objectives and create plausible alternatives at a more strategic level.

MPSDM can function well as an umbrella framework for workplace strategy creation, as a complementary theoretical and methodological structure besides the strategic planning process for CRE alignment that Appel-Meulenbroek and Haynes (2014) outlined in situational analysis steps.

2.1 MPSDM for workplace management

Workplace management makes key decisions on interventions for physical work environments to produce added value for organisations (Jensen & van der Voordt, 2017). This task has the potential to maximise value creation, especially if it is grounded in ‘evidence-based’ decision-making. The importance of basing decisions in the built environment on evidence has its roots in Post-Occupancy Evaluation literature and practice (Preiser et al., 1988). However, a few issues still affect workplace decision processes, where MPSDM could come at hand.

- 1 Stakeholders in the workplace are numerous and diverse (Heywood & Kenley, 2013; Niemi & Lindholm, 2010); however, who usually takes decisions is a restricted group of only a few executives. Involving all the stakes at play is exactly what is needed in workplace decision processes (Coenen et al., 2012), especially when office arrangements call for radical change. MPSDM, both theoretically and practically, suggests different methods to engage multiple viewpoints (i.e. T, O and P) represented by actors in distinct roles.
- 2 Research on CRE alignment and FM Value Add attribute to value a comprehensive meaning, including exchange and use value (Appel-Meulenbroek & Haynes, 2014). While the exchange value is relatively easy to measure because it is more quantifiable, measurement of the use value is challenging. A large quantity of data is available to inform workplace management, but indicators, tools and techniques to this purpose are still underutilised and underdeveloped (Alker et al., 2014; Becker, 1990; van Der Voordt & Jensen, 2018). The implementation of MPSDM would allow to frame the workplaces’ multiple impacts that can be distinguished as economic, physical and social (Becker, 1990; Varcoe, 1996; Alker et al., 2014; Kämpf-Dern & Konkol, 2017), resembling general organisational decisions (Courtney, 2001) and the three main perspectives of this decision-making theory, respectively: organisational, technical and individual.
- 3 Workplace management, as real estate management more generally, is highly complex and often driven by criteria of urgency and immediate business need (Appel-Meulenbroek & Haynes, 2014), rather than through careful analysis and systematic processes (Apgar, 1995), namely dominated by strategy. Even though some pilot studies (e.g. Arkesteijn et al., 2017) confirm that stakeholders appreciate decisions that are not taken on a gut feeling or determined by power relations, theories and methods need to be advanced to evaluate the current situation in the physical work environment against alternative solutions, while considering multiple needs.

The MPSDM scheme helps to address these three main issues through the systematic application of multiple available methods to be chosen based on the specific situation under examination. In effect, a few methods are already applied to some extent in workplace-related decisions. These can be favourably combined in a general methodology to address multiple perspectives into workplace decision-making (Table 8.1). Some of the most common ones are briefly described in the following sections.

2.1.1 Characterise workplace problems

A problem can be defined as ‘a situation of subjective discomfort of a stakeholder mixed with a desire to do something about it’ (De Leeuw, 2002, p. 36). In order to figure out the main problems to be solved through appropriate strategies, MPSDM recommends taking into account all relevant stakeholders as people both who have the power to influence the outcome of that

Table 8.1 Available strategies/methods based on MPSDM challenges to address WPM issues

<i>WPM issues</i>	<i>MPSDM challenges</i>	<i>Available strategies/methods</i>
Numerous and diverse stakeholders	Characterise the problem	<i>Stakeholder analysis</i> Participatory and non-participatory methods e.g. Influence & interest matrix, Social Network Analysis, PESTEL and <i>SWOT analysis</i>
Focus on economic-financial returns	Simplify the problem	Scorecard frameworks e.g. Cognitive mapping, <i>balanced scorecards</i> , <i>cost-benefit analyses</i>
Lack of analysis and systematic processes	Create strategy from analysis	Value-focused thinking e.g. Value trees, <i>scenario planning</i> , <i>multi-attribute value functions</i>

Note: The methods in italics are those that are described in the following sections.

decision or action, and who are affected by a decision or action (Freeman, 1984). In the workplace realm, the concept of ‘user’ is often affected by a simplistic approach (Olsson et al., 2010). On the contrary, as studies by Den Heijer (2011) demonstrate, every CREM project team needs representatives of all stakeholder viewpoints – at least reflecting four perspectives: policy makers the strategic view, controllers the financial view, technical managers the physical view and users the functional view. Building up on this model, numerous types of workplace stakeholders may emerge both on the supply side (such as company owners and building operation/facilities management teams) and on the demand side (including all categories of employees, managers and other temporary users). Potentially, also external stakeholders such as the citizens, are affected by some corporate real estate decisions and could be interested in partaking in the decision processes. As it is not simple to identify all relevant workplace stakeholders, possibly some remain unrecognised, and their values, beliefs and expectations are disregarded. By referring to the MPSDM, multiple methods can be used to identify them and engage them all in the definition of strategic objectives. Following is a brief description of two possible strategies.

STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS

Stakeholder analysis stems from business management, policy research and political science (Reed et al., 2009) but has been applied in different contexts including urban design and regeneration projects (Berta et al., 2018).

Stakeholder analysis (SA) consists of methods for: (1) identifying stakeholders; (2) differentiating between and categorising stakeholders; and (3) investigating relationships between stakeholders (Reed et al., 2009). Focus groups, interviews and snowball sampling support stakeholders’ identification. A noteworthy method for categorising workplace stakeholders can be the power/interest matrix (Ferretti, 2016), where two main questions are investigated:

- How interested is each stakeholder in impressing its expectations on project decisions?
- Do these stakeholders have enough influence in the process to do so?

Social Network Analysis, along with knowledge mapping, could be favourably adopted with the aim to interpret the network of stakeholders, by measuring their ties and respective knowledge regarding the situation where the problem arises (Reed et al., 2009).

STRENGTHS-WEAKNESSES-OPPORTUNITIES-THREATS (SWOT) ANALYSES

The SWOT analysis tool focuses on the organisation's current performance (strengths and weaknesses) and the organisation's future (opportunities and threats) (see also Chapter 9 on alignment theory) (Chermack & Kasshanna, 2007). First developed to analyse case studies (Learned et al., 1965), SWOT represents a consolidated approach in many fields, including territorial planning and environmental decision-making. Recent elaborations in a 'spatial' context by Ferretti (2019) suggest that SWOT analysis can be used in the generation of objectives for a strategic decision. As such, key variables that SWOT analyses would consider when the motivation and goals of a workplace change need to be set are:

- endogenous factors, i.e. both positive and negative aspects that are part of the system and that can be directly controlled and modified by the organisation, and
- exogenous factor, i.e. variables that are external to the system but that can still influence it; these variables are not under the company's control and thus cannot be directly modified, but it is important to identify them in order to take advantage of the positive aspects and prevent negative consequences (Mintzberg, 1990).

2.1.2 Simplify the problem

MPSDM invites to frame the expected outcomes and performance of a strategy or project through the elaboration of strong scorecards. This is especially important in the context of workplace strategies, where it happens frequently that multiple alternatives are presented and need to be carefully compared. The identification of key variables to decompose the workplace problem at hand can help evaluate distinct options based on separate simple elements of judgement and even track the performance of the chosen solution afterwards. Two approaches to do so are proposed here.

COST-BENEFIT ANALYSIS (CBA)

Cost-benefit analysis (CBA) is a method by which one can analyse the economic impact of decisions, systems, projects or investments, where costs and benefits are usually valued in monetary terms (Mishan, 1971). The method calls for execution of the following steps: (1) identify benefits of the subject matter; (2) identify and measure costs; and then (3) compare and contrast the identified benefits to the costs. This method is adopted from environmental analysis and policy decisions and applied in corporate real estate and facility management decisions. Nevertheless, in the workplace this necessarily requires to account for non-monetary costs and benefits (van der Voordt, 2004). It would be interesting to see CBA elaborated by different workplace stakeholders, as a means to figure out their respective values, beliefs and expectations, similarly to what Arkesteijn (2019) elaborated in a framework of decision variables with four different stakeholder categories.

BALANCED-SCORECARD (BSC) AND KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPIs)

The identification of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to assess and keep track of performances is quite common in facility management (Hinks & McNay, 1999). However, KPI systems are still lacking potential correlations among indicators that specifically affect workplace performances.

A decisive milestone in the approach to performance indicators happened when Kaplan and Norton (1996) proposed a Balanced Scorecard (BSC), considering four perspectives, namely: client, finance, internal business processes and learning and growth. Nevertheless, the BSC per se is a business management tool and neglects the physical environment where the business takes place (Meng & Minogue, 2011). Some attempts to overcome this deficiency can be found in the so-called Service Balanced Scorecard (SBS; Brackertz & Kenley, 2002), based on four perspectives: services, community, building and financial. Based on the BSC approach, van der Voordt (2004) proposed an integrated framework specific to workplace performance. A multicriteria scorecard framework representing risk, return and costs (including upside potential) of specific alternatives, as it is applied in MPSDM (Davis & Dreyer, 2009), could enrich this approach. For instance, each KPI could be considered as a criterion against which to assess the effectiveness of alternative projects.

2.1.3 Create workplace strategy from analysis

Finally, after analysis of the most meaningful criteria upon which to deliberate about the effectiveness of potential solutions to the workplace problem, specific methods can again be inspired to MPSDM for outlining a strategy. The strategy needs to evaluate several alternatives and to take into consideration all the relevant needs of the involved stakeholders, based on their values, beliefs and expectations as they have emerged in the previous phases. The formulation of the final strategy should include clear expression of the expected value added by its implementation. In this scope, two methods are suggested in this section.

SCENARIO PLANNING

Over 50% of Fortune 500 companies have used Scenario Planning technique in their planning already in the 1980s (Schoemaker, 1993). The method entails the production of ‘future-now’ narratives, which helps deal with complexity and see problems in a concrete manner. This method aims not to forecast the future, but to rehearse the future (Schwartz, 1991). In the real estate and workplace fields, this process has been experimented (Saurin et al., 2008) into consequential stages, including: formulation of a well-defined and specific strategic question to guide the following strategic conversations; definition of the driving forces of future change (for the workplace these can be, for instance, demography, economy, governance, environment, society and technology); description of pivotal uncertainties and issues; and creation of different scenarios that should demonstrate to be plausible, robust, divergent, challenging, useful and memorable.

Scenario planning can contribute to the design of multiple alternative workplace strategies and design solutions as it promotes creativity in the generation of options (Ferretti, 2016), helps identify major trends by levels of impact and degrees of certainty (Appel-Meulenbroek & Haynes, 2014), encourages to conceive all actions leading to different possible futures (Godet, 1991) and generates insights about the potential consequences of strategies in the long term (Dewulf & van Der Schaaf, 2004).

MULTI-ATTRIBUTE VALUE THEORY (MAVT)

This theory belongs to the broad category of multi-criteria analysis techniques and is considered a relatively simple and understandable approach for addressing decision-making problems (Ülengin et al., 2010). MAVT takes advantage of the axiom of rational choice, which makes

the resulting decisions justifiable and defensible in different contexts. This theory entails (Ferretti, 2016):

- selection of relevant values and objectives to perform the evaluation of a large number of alternatives following Value Focused Thinking (VFT) methods, and
- ranking of the different alternatives, to be evaluated through both qualitative and quantitative parameters through a set of weighted attributes (Keeney, 1992), which allows for recommendations in the implementation of the options.

Here values are conceived as principles to decide about the desirability of each alternative and the related consequences, whereas alternatives are means to achieve values (Keeney, 1994). This is important, especially in the conviction that workplace management should be driven by value adding propositions (Jensen & van der Voordt, 2017) (see also Chapter 12 on the Value Adding Management model).

VFT consists of different categories of questions that can be asked to help different stakeholders identify decision objectives, including: a wish list; problems and shortcomings; consequences; goals, constraints and guidelines; and more. The related questions should be tailored to the problem at hand and can vary depending on the individual or group being interviewed/facilitated, or on the survey being designed (Parnell et al., 2013).

Even though MAVT has been criticised because it shows poor mathematical foundations (Barzilai, 2010) and scarce applicability as a learning tool to test whether decision makers' intuition is objective or right (Binnekamp, 2010), it still seems appropriate to critically analyse and weight the criteria defined through CBA and BSC, which indeed contain qualitative and quantitative measures. Moreover, MAVT and VFT are ideal to represent different perspectives on a problem, as in work environments where stakeholders are rather diverse and can support meaningful communication among stakeholders (Keeney, 1994).

2.2 Adaptation of MPSDM to workplace management

In conclusion, the adoption of a systematic multiple-perspective model for strategic decision-making in workplace management is highly recommendable as it can:

- 1 Broaden the group of stakeholders to include numerous and diverse perspectives;
- 2 Guide workplace strategy creation through a structured set of values, which can include economic, environmental, and social aspects through quantitative and qualitative criteria; and
- 3 Coordinate the decision process upon a workplace strategy following an orderly methodology that relies on analysis of multiple scenarios and needs.

The theory framed in this chapter composes of three main methodological phases (Figure 8.2).

The elaboration of this theory advances previous studies and propositions on MCDA and CRE alignment models as it stresses the strong connection between the analytical phase and the implementation phase, through the continuous involvement of stakeholders. At the same time, this theory complements traditional stakeholder approaches, as it overcomes their mere identification and definition to involve them in the creation of a workplace strategy. This theory can be associated to the Preference-based Accommodation Strategy (PAS) elaborated by Arkesteijn (2019). PAS applies at the CREM level with the goal to align portfolio to the general corporate strategy, while this MPSDM digs into the workplace dimension to support workplace strategy creation.

Figure 8.2 Three strategic phases of workplace decisions

3 Methodology/research approach

The validity of the proposed MPSDM theory applied to workplace strategies should be first proved as that of other conceptual models. Then, Tan et al. (2014), for instance, use a questionnaire to confirm four dimensions or variables of RE/FM alignment. Based on a five-point Likert scale, senior professionals in the area of FM and real estate/property, mostly working at strategic levels and representing multiple countries, would indicate the degree of relevance, completeness, robustness and soundness of the concept.

The applicability of this theory should be tested in further investigations, according to design decision methods to answer the question ‘how to develop, form and make’ (Arkesteijn, 2019, p. 147) a workplace strategy based on an MPSDM approach. Methods that academics have used to study the topic in the field of decision-making and/or when using adaptations of the MPSDM model in different contexts are usually empirical (e.g. Hall & Davis, 2007). For instance, pilot studies have been developed to test Preference-based Accommodation Strategy (PAS) design in a university campus by involving four main stakeholder categories (based on Den Heijer, 2011), such as in Arkesteijn et al. (2017), as well as to measuring facility performance in local government by involving four stakeholder groups, such as in Brackertz and Kenley (2002). Overall, it is recommended to use a multiple-case study in order to reach more valuable results than from applying a pilot to only one case, which risks showing context-dependent results.

Moreover, the applicability of this approach needs to be verified through the opinion of the stakeholders who in the end are the beneficiaries of the theory and related application. In this scope, interview rounds and ethnographic methods (e.g. observations) have been carried out by Arkesteijn (2019), following again on soft operations research methods (in particular, Joldersma & Roelofs, 2004) which investigate: (1) experiences with the method (interviews); (2) attractiveness of the method (interviews); and effectiveness of the method through both (3) participants’ observations and (4) observers’ (i.e. researchers’) perceptions.

Similar research approaches would be suitable as well to test the MPSDM theory as it is proposed in this chapter. Ideally, a second verification stage would be necessary to evaluate the implementation effectiveness of the resulting workplace strategy. This latter goal would be addressed by undertaking Post-Occupancy Evaluations, and by keeping track of the previously

defined KPIs throughout the application of the strategy up until the implementation of workplace design and management solutions.

The application of the proposed theory would encourage studies of the ‘perspectives’ that may emerge over workplace management. Research on users (see also Chapter 16 on user-centred design thinking) and stakeholders in the workplace is scattered and lacks coherent results.

First, the application of stakeholder analysis methods would promote the involvement of a larger number of stakeholders in workplace decisions, as advocated by several authors (Den Heijer, 2011; Jensen & van der Voordt, 2017). However, the selection of the people to include in these activities is not always carefully programmed, and therefore outcomes are not robust. Systematic application of MPSDM into the workplace would lead to representation of all relevant stakeholders of a workplace strategy/project.

Second, MPSDM would stimulate more refined categorisation of stakeholders. MPSDM suggests inducing stakeholders’ groups by analysis of individuals, rather than identifying them by deductive classification based on assumptions and habits (e.g. organisational charts and so on). Looking at the values, beliefs and expectations of workplace stakeholders at an individual level could generate interesting insights. These paradigms can be investigated through specific questionnaires, interviews or focus groups, but even better through ethnographic and action research methods by observation and/or participation in the workplace decision-making process.

Further research on the translation of MPSDM principles into the workplace realm would help create stronger links between the decision-making process and the implementation phases following up workplace strategy creation.

4 Limitations

The models described in the decision-making literature are rarely applied in practice as they are described in theory (Turpin & Marais, 2004). These are to be considered frameworks and reference methodologies that should be adapted or transformed into bespoke tools in each company. Thus, using MPSDM to address corporate real estate and facility management decisions would require application in real workplace ‘settings’ to understand the extent to which it fits and positively affects actual decision-making processes.

The scheme herewith described (see Figure 8.2) also does not dig down into individual mental processes affecting stakeholder decisions. Potential expansion of the research could stem from industrial-organisational (I/O) psychology that has recently tried to apply Judgement and Decision Making (JDM) in the workplace to add knowledge about how managers decide upon a range of topics, including different ‘heuristics and biases’ (Kahneman et al., 1982).

Moreover, research in behavioural decision-making shows that decision makers are likely to discount or devalue the relevance of outcomes that are delayed, compared to those that come immediately at hand (Anderson & Ones, 2001). This could explain why workplace strategies are often short-sighted and tend to be measured in terms of costs. In any case, JDM theories could reveal interesting thought patterns when applied to workplace decision-making processes.

Finally, the proposed theory does not take into account all the possible Decision Support Systems (DSS) that nowadays can be used to aid decision processes, including model management systems and knowledge-based decision support systems, which use artificial intelligence but also expert systems to expand the knowledge sources available to decision makers (Courtney, 2001). Much richer tools are needed for handling text, images, pictures, sounds and videos than are now available in DSS software (Courtney, 2001).

5 Theory relevance to practice

Strategic decision-making shares with workplace management and strategy the goal to address long time frames and to provide overarching objectives guiding tactical and operational decisions. A wide set of perspectives is involved in workplace-related decisions, and MPSDM invites to consider them all, based on the values, beliefs and expectations of the stakeholders. The regular application of such an approach in practice could prevent single-sighted workplace decisions by helping coordinate the efforts of the various professionals and disciplines toward shared visions. Support for the so-called ‘softer’ aspects of the decision, the organisational, personal, ethical and aesthetic perspectives, must be provided. Especially, MPSDM suggests that systematic support resources are applicable to create and evaluate options.

In all, the framework proposed in this chapter can inspire more structured processes in workplace management and bring the attention of practitioners on already formalised tools to handle decisions upon workplace strategies. Workplace managers can refer to MPSDM methods in several ways. First, MPSDM can support them in the recognition of key stakeholders and workplace objectives, as difficulties emerge in consultation and coordination among important business units such as corporate real estate, human resources, information technology, financial departments and capital and communication (Appel-Meulenbroek & Haynes, 2014). Second, workplace managers can recur to MPSDM to systematise broad sets of performance objectives for workplace strategies through scorecards, that are likely to fit a variety of organisational cultures and to combine conflicting scopes (Appel-Meulenbroek & Haynes, 2014) – e.g. chief financial officers’ to minimise costs, human resources to increase employee satisfaction, etc. And third, MPSDM can assist workplace managers with specific toolsets to elaborate the final decisions and communicate the reasons of the chosen strategy to a large panel of constituents, by graphical aids or narratives. Overall, the delineation of a decision-making process constitutes a reference guideline of iterative steps that can benefit all the actors involved in workplace management, from company owners to corporate real estate and human resources managers, aiming to embrace a truly interdisciplinary strategy.

6 Further reading

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