A case study of the role of innovation process determinants on innovative product development

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Abstract

Over the past decades the inexorable march towards innovation among business society has placed, which requires a competent system that improves creativity, competency, and flexibility among managers and employees. In order to gain a deeper understanding of the role of innovation process on innovative product development, the present research developed a model by integrating previous researches’ results on the following determinants: organization climate, innovation shared vision, leadership style, absorptive capacity (the ability to identify, assimilate, and exploit knowledge from the environment), and inter-firm cooperation & collaboration. A qualitative research conducted to find how and why innovation process determinants influence innovative product development over time. Findings support the existence of cyclic interactions and mutual impacts among the determinants. The observed outcomes are also in line with previous studies and in this research further insight is provided to facilitate innovation process path to accomplish innovative products.

Keywords: Innovation; cyclic path; organization; individual; time

Introduction

The present article is inspired by numerous theoretical and empirical researches’ findings along with history of innovative product development of the case study1 of this research. In most of the cases reported in the literature, the existence of discord and misalignment among organization individuals in developing innovative product is recognized. Across various innovation studies done by social scientists and practitioners, there remains a general consensus that innovation is a primary source of growth, change and competitive advantage (Damanpour, Walker, & Avellaneda, 2009). Therefore, Innovation’s central role is to support long-term survival of an organization (Scott & Bruce, 1994). According to (Van de Ven, 1986; Van de Ven, 1999) innovation process consists of certain factors including people (individuals), ideas, transaction and context. “Innovation process creates and constrained by multiple enacted environments” (Van de Ven, 1999), and the development stages over time (Van de Ven, 1999). The most commonly accepted view of an innovation process is that multiple functions, resources, and disciplines must collaborate in harmony in order to transform an innovative idea into a concrete attainable reality (Daft, 1978; Scott & Bruce, 1994; Van de Ven, 1986). The Minnesota Innovation Research Program (MIRP) studies show that the innovation process cannot be reduced to a linear model of stages and phases; rather it is best characterized as a nonlinear dynamic system (Van de Ven, 1999). This study is focused on advancing understanding of the innovation process and exploring its underpinning associated determinants by integrating organization climate, vision, leadership style, absorptive capacity, inter-firm collaboration and cooperation’s factors. Therefore a framework is elaborated that is shown in figure one and intended to investigate the answers of following research questions:

1 German International Engineering Company

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Why do interactions among innovation process elements influence innovative product development?

How the defined innovation process determinants of this study impact innovative product development?

Theoretical Foundation

![Research framework](image)

**Organization Climate**
- Organizational flexibility & participation,
- Pro-innovation culture,
- Organizational communication

**Innovation Visions & Cognition**
- Clarity and consistencies of innovation,
- Innovation shared vision role on resource support

**Leadership Style**
- LD- expectation and persistency
- LD- consensus on innovation strategy

**Absorptive Capacity**
- Networks of communication
- Sharing and transferring
- Change understanding and acceptance

**Inter-firm Cooperation & Collaboration**
- Cross-functional team, Cooperation
- Innovation oriented interaction and

Own development based on literature view

Conclusions

Results from twelve semi-structured interviews with various functional departments from different countries showed, at first and foremost, innovation shared vision drastically impacts innovation process and innovative product development, while the necessity of stabilizing inter-firm cooperation and collaboration has been observed and proved in order to accelerate and improve innovation processes. The current research also observes that leadership should establish a clear and accurate vision regarding innovative product development through a dominant approach, which is supported by organization’s members and policies, and that vision should be practicing over time. Consequently, employees cognition will become aligned toward organization vision. Therefore, the paradoxes and competition among employees may decrease through the time and members will likely learn how to share their experiences.
and collaborate with each other to reach the organization's vision. Also during this process of sharing experiences and transferring knowledge the level of realized absorptive capacity will be improved.

References


