

A Literature Review on the Effect of Industrial Clusters and the Absorptive Capacity on Innovation

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Abstract : In recent decades, the analysis of the effects of clustering as an essential factor for the development of innovations and the competitiveness of enterprises has raised great interest in different areas. Nowadays, companies have access to almost all tangible and intangible resources located and/or developed in any country in the world. However, despite the obvious advantages that this situation entails for companies, their geographical location has shown itself, increasingly clearly, to be a fundamental factor that positively influences their innovative performance and competitiveness. Industrial clusters could represent a unique level of analysis, positioned between the individual company and the industry, which makes them an ideal unit of analysis to determine the effects derived from company membership of a cluster. Also, the absorptive capacity (hereinafter 'AC') can mediate the process of innovation development by companies located in a cluster. The transformation and exploitation of knowledge could have a mediating effect between knowledge acquisition and innovative performance. The main objective of this work is to determine the key factors that affect the degree of generation and use of knowledge from the environment by companies and, consequently, their innovative performance and competitiveness. The elements analyzed are the companies' membership of a cluster and the AC. To this end, 30 most relevant papers published on this subject in the 'Web of Science' database have been reviewed. Our findings show that, within a cluster, the knowledge coming from the companies' environment can significantly influence their innovative performance and competitiveness, although in this relationship, the degree of access and exploitation of the companies to this knowledge plays a fundamental role, which depends on a series of elements both internal and external to the company.

Keywords : absorptive capacity, clusters, innovation, knowledge

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