

Increasing Holism: Qualitative, Cross-Dimensional Study of Contemporary Innovation Processes

Authors : Sampo Tukiainen, Jukka Mattila, Niina Erkama, Erkki Ormala

Abstract : During the past decade, calls for more holistic and integrative organizational innovation research have been increasingly voiced. On the one hand, from the theoretical perspective, the reason for this has been the tendency in contemporary innovation studies to focus on disciplinary subfields, often leading to challenges in integrating theories in meaningful ways. For example, we find that during the past three decades the innovation research has evolved into an academic field consisting of several independent research streams, such as studies on organizational learning, project management, and top management teams, to name but a few. The innovation research has also proliferated according to different dimensions of innovation, such as sources, drivers, forms, and the nature of innovation. On the other hand, from the practical perspective the rationale has been the need to develop understanding of the solving of complex, interdisciplinary issues and problems in contemporary and future societies and organizations. Therefore, for advancing theorizing, as well as the practical applicability of organizational innovation research, we acknowledge the need for more integrative and holistic perspectives and approaches. We contribute to addressing this challenge by developing a 'box transcendent' perspective to examine interlinkages in and across four key dimensions of organizational innovation processes, which traditionally have been studied in separate research streams. Building on an in-depth, qualitative analysis of 123 interviews of CTOs (or equivalent) and CEOs in top innovative Finnish companies as well as three in-depth case studies, both as part of an EU-level interview study of more than 700 companies, we specify interlinkages in and between i) strategic management, ii) innovation management, iii) implementation and organization, and iv) commercialization, in innovation processes. We contribute to the existing innovation research in multiple ways. Firstly, we develop a cross-dimensional, 'box transcendent' conceptual model at the level of organizational innovation process. Secondly, this modeling enables us to extend existing theorizing by allowing us to distinguish specific cross-dimensional innovation 'profiles' in two different company categories: large multinational corporations and SMEs. Finally, from the more practical perspective, we consider the implications of such innovation 'profiles' for the societal and institutional, policy-making development.

Keywords : holistic research, innovation management, innovation studies, organizational innovation

Conference Title : ICIBM 2017 : International Conference on Innovation, Business and Management

Conference Location : Amsterdam, Netherlands

Conference Dates : May 14-15, 2017