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Investigating the Factors Affecting the Innovation of Firms in Metropolitan Regions: The Case of Mashhad Metropolitan Region, Iran

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Abstract : While with the evolution of the economy towards a knowledge-based economy, innovation is a requirement for metropolitan regions, the adoption of an open innovation strategy is an option and a requirement for many industrial firms in these regions. Studies show that investing in research and development units cannot alone increase innovation. Within the framework of the theory of learning regions, this gap, which scholars call it the 'innovation gap', is filled with regional features of firms. This paper attempts to investigate the factors affecting the open innovation of firms in metropolitan regions, and it searches for these in territorial innovation models and, in particular, the theory of learning regions. In the next step, the effect of identified factors which is considered as regional learning factors in this research is analyzed on the innovation of sample firms by SPSS software using multiple linear regression. The case study of this research is constituted of industrial enterprises from two groups of food industry and auto parts in Toos industrial town in Mashhad metropolitan region. For data gathering of this research, interviews were conducted with managers of industrial firms using structured questionnaires. Based on this study, the effect of factors such as size of firms, inter-firm competition, the use of local labor force and institutional infrastructures were significant in the innovation of the firms studied, and 44% of the changes in the firms' innovation occurred as a result of the change in these factors.

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