

BUILDING INNOVATION MANAGEMENT ASSESSMENT THEORY FRAMEWORK THROUGH THE LENS OF TQM

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ABSTRACT

Practically, quantifying, evaluating and benchmarking innovation capability or practice is a significant and complex issue for many contemporary organizations. Indeed, there are similarities in what innovation management and TQM trying to achieve. However, Can TQM function as a specific resource that allows organizations to build their competence and capability in innovation? Hence, this researcher for the 1st time examined the innovation management assessment framework developed through the lens of TQM and provided some unique insights as to the synergies between this 2 different stream of theories and their applications in relation to innovation management.

Keywords: innovation management, innovation capability, TQM, assessment, company performance

1. INTRODUCTION

Recent researches have established a positive link between innovation and business performance (Covin & Slevin, 1989; Dess, Lumpkin & Covin, 1997; Morris & Sexton, 1996; Zahra & Covin, 1995; Kuczmarski, 2002; Lindsay & Corral de Zubielqui, 2008). Innovations are regarded as an important source of increased productivity (Segovia, 2010). Innovation has been linked to the development of new enterprises and growth of existing enterprises (Bingham, 2003). Innovation is generally considered the most valuable source of growth and competitiveness (Alvarez and Barney, 2000; Covin and Miles, 1999).

From innovation management point of view, exploring the suitability of Total Quality Management (TQM) as a management model could enrich the perspective of managerial practices in innovative organizations. As Cooper (1998) suggests, academics as well as practitioners have devoted significant amount of time to continually seeking and identifying organizational factors, practices and resources that support and enhance innovation (Prajogo & Sohal, 2001). However, there are conflicts among arguments made by different researchers. Some support the positive relationship between TQM and Innovation, as TQM always incorporates the principles that are in sync with innovation (Dean & Evan, 1994; Kanji, 1996; Tang, 1998), whereas others claim that TQM leads to narrow-minded organization (Reed et al, 1996) which are not conducive to creativity and innovation (Imai, 1986; Kalyar & Rafi, 2012). In this respect, a particular research question can thus arise: Can TQM function as a specific resource that allows organizations to build their competence and capabilities in innovation (Prajogo & Sohal, 2001)? Or specifically, Can we see innovation management through the lens of TQM? This research paper attempts to address this research question in the ensuing sections.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW ON INNOVATION CAPABILITIES

In order to innovation, companies need to have innovation capabilities, and to survive and to thrive, companies must have some specific innovation capabilities in order to identify market gaps and offer new values. In this study, innovation capability can be defined as the elements/determinants influencing an organisation's capability to manage innovation.

Despite the considerable research efforts in many salient fields of inquiry on innovation management, no universally acceptable theory exists on the concept and model (Salicru, 2004). Indeed, innovation management literature is a fragmented corpus and researchers come from many different disciplines, often studying and emphasizing different dimensions of innovation management (Wolde, 1994).