COLLABORATION CAPABILITY – A FOCAL CONCEPT IN KNOWLEDGE CREATION AND COLLABORATIVE INNOVATION IN NETWORKS


Kirsimarja Blomqvist* and Juha Levy
Department of Business Administration and Technology
Business Research Centre
Lappeenranta University of Technology
P.O. Box 20, 53851 Lappeenranta, Finland
Fax: +358 5 621 6699
E-mail: kirsimarja.blomqvist@lut.fi
E-mail: juha.levy@lut.fi
*Corresponding author

ABSTRACT

Sustainable competitive advantage is not possible in knowledge-based competition without continuous innovation. Innovations, by nature, emerge in social interaction in which diverse actors share complementary knowledge. Collaboration capability is considered a prerequisite for actors if they wish to leverage such knowledge. The concept is analysed through a state-of-the-art review of earlier conceptual and empirical research on network collaboration, and as a result we propose that collaboration capability integrates the key elements in many closely related but semantically diverse conceptualisations. As a concept, it underlines the relational perspective and enables knowledge creation in a risky and uncertain environment. It can be defined as ‘the actor’s capability to build and manage network relationships based on mutual trust, communication and commitment’. Furthermore, it could be considered an integrative and cross-level concept explaining much of the knowledge creation and innovation in networks.

Keywords: collaboration capability; knowledge creation; innovation; inter-organisational relationships; intra-organisational collaboration; networks.

Reference to this paper should be made as follows: