

Doctoral dissertation abstract

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“Contractual New Product Introduction. Model for Customer and Service Provider Collaboration”

Introducing a new product to the market is one of the key business processes within organizations, which, in the presented model, is realized through the collaboration of two organizations operating on a partnership basis within a formal contractual agreement. Contemporary market conditions, where new products are developed through complex and long-term projects requiring advanced technologies and specialized competencies, increasingly demand cooperation with an external service provider within a formally regulated inter-organizational relationship.

The main aim of this dissertation is to introduce a new theoretical concept – Contractual New Product Introduction (CNPI) – and to develop an original model of inter-organizational collaboration that systematizes and organizes the relationship between the customer (project initiator) and the service provider (project coordinator) in the new product introduction process. The conceptual model focuses on formalizing roles, responsibilities, coordination mechanisms and partnership principles, which together form the foundation for effective and contractually managed innovation projects. This approach is grounded in a formal contractual framework, which is conceptualized not as a barrier, but as a strategic mechanism facilitating alignment and effective coordination of stakeholder activities within innovation-driven initiatives. **The research was structured around four key questions:**

RQ1. How do the customer and the service provider collaborate during NPI within a contractual agreement? What are the roles and responsibilities?

RQ2. What are the customer requirements for service providers when introducing a new product under the contract in the context of inter-organizational relationship?

RQ3. How do the customer and the service provider collaborate during NPI within a contractual agreement? What are the roles and responsibilities?

RQ4. What is a role of collaboration, coordination and communication in strategic partnership relations between customer and their service providers?

To capture the multifaceted nature of the phenomenon, **a mixed-methods approach was employed**, underpinned by a triangulation methodology that integrates multiple research techniques. The investigation commenced with a practical reflection grounded in the author's practical experience managing inter-organizational NPI projects governed by formal contractual agreements. This initial phase facilitated the identification of practical challenges and the delineation of research objectives. The next step was a systematic literature review, which established conceptual foundations and revealed a research gap. Subsequently, the empirical investigation comprised a quantitative survey alongside a qualitative focus group discussion. The results confirmed that the efficacy of inter-organizational collaboration within the CNPI framework is contingent upon mutual trust, alignment of competencies, coherence of objectives and the implementation of effective communication, coordination and cooperation mechanisms.

Consequently, a conceptual CNPI model was developed to facilitate the management of new product introduction in environments requiring high specialization, custom design or co-industrialization. The model serves not only as a theoretical proposition but also as an practical framework for coordinating complex inter-organizational projects within formal collaborative contexts.

This dissertation provides a valuable contribution to the academic discourse on innovation management and inter-organizational collaboration, particularly within the domains of relationship and project management, while simultaneously delivering a practical framework for organizations engaged in collaborative product development with external business partners.