

ORGANIZATIONAL CREATIVE PROCESS FROM AN EVOLUTIONARY PERSPECTIVE: THE CREATIVE PROCESS OF TAIWANESE INTERNET FIRMS

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ABSTRACT

This paper uses a personal creativity theory to analogize organizational creative process and tries to build a model of organizational creative process. This approach analyses creativity from an evolutionary viewpoint, which believes creativity is the process of variation, selection and retention. In our model, organizational creative process begins from generation of variation, which must survive under the internal selection and external selection, thus becomes a recognized creativity or innovation. By application of this model, we can explain what characteristics of industry and organization will generate better creativity. Additionally, industry environment will influence organizational creative process through internal selection and external selection criteria setting. This paper takes Taiwanese internet industry for case study.

BACKGROUND

There have long been four different approach which includes product, personality, place and process, so-called "4P" in creativity theory. Some researchers propose that through improving cognitive skills or creativity-relevant skills (process perspective) people can enhance their creative performance. In contrast, there have been few efforts in understanding organizational creative process and entrepreneurial process (Russell, 1999[1]; Brazeal & Herbert, 1999[2]). From the process perspective, we can capture the dynamics of the creative process itself and know how creative ideas generated and survived under environmental pressure. Many researchers thinks that creativity or innovation is a process of evolution (Csiksentmihalyi,1996[3]; Kwasnicki,,1996[4]). Through variation, selection and retention, creativity becomes accepted as part of our culture. There are few efforts to use personal creativity theory into organizational-level creativity, especially in non-individual perspective. Therefore this paper uses a personal creativity theory, which addresses evolutionary process, to analogize organizational creative process, and build a model of organizational creative process.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The objective of this paper is to build a model that describes an organizational creative process. By building the model,

this paper will try to answer the following questions:

1. From an evolutionary perspective, what process does an organization pass through to generate creativity?
2. From an evolutionary perspective, what characteristic of organization will have better creativity ?
3. From an evolutionary perspective, what characteristic of industry will have better creativity and innovation?
4. What influence does industry environment have on organizational creative process?

METHODOLOGY

This paper tries to build a model of an organizational creative process. We first review creativity and entrepreneurship theory and then based on individual creative process to analogize organization creativity. By theory deduction, we build a conceptual model and develop tentative propositions.

Furthermore, we will observe the creative process of Taiwanese internet firms to further test and modify the tentative propositions. The cases are chosen with the level of influence on the existing domain(Csiksentmihalyi, 1996). Seven internet firms are observed, including two firms in technology domain and five firms in non-technology domain, such as electronic newspaper, internet radio, community and so on.

Conceptual Model

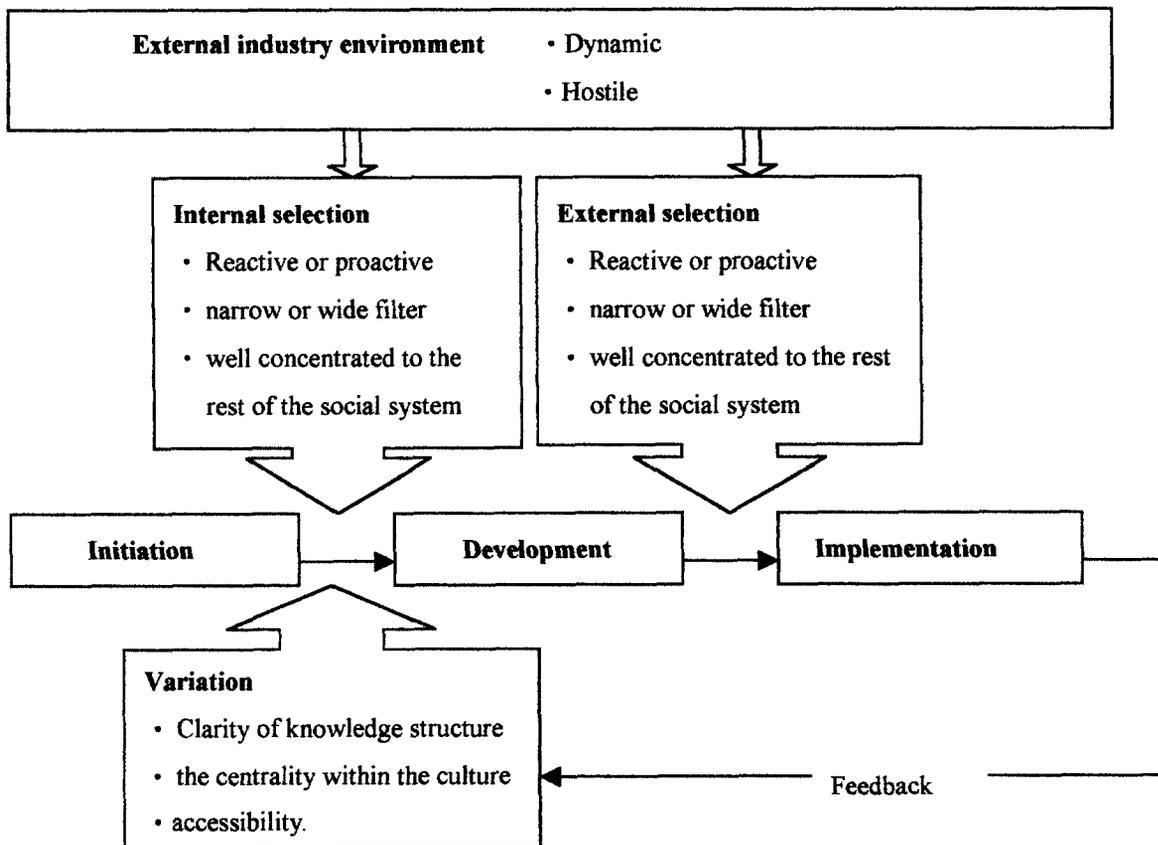


Figure 2. The conceptual model

TENTATIVE PROPOSITIONS

Proposition 1. The clarity of knowledge structure in an organization will affect the rate of creative ideas that the organization can generate.

Proposition 2. If innovation are highly valued in the culture, the organization will have better creativity.

Proposition 3. If knowledge in an organization is highly accessible to organizational members, the organization will have better creativity

Proposition 4. If organizational internal gatekeepers are proactive in searching innovation, the organizations will have better creativity.

Proposition 5. If organizational internal gatekeepers take wider filter in internal selection, the organizations will have better creativity

Proposition 5.1 If the cost of commercialization is lower, organizational internal gatekeepers will take wider filter.

Proposition 6. If an organizations have a central position in its industry network , the organization will have better creativity

Proposition 7. If consumers (market gatekeepers) are proactive in searching innovation, the industries will have better creativity

Proposition 8. If consumers (market gatekeepers) take wide filter in external selection, industries will have better creative performance.

Proposition 9. If consumers (market gatekeeper) have variety of preference, the industries will have better creative performance.

Proposition 10. If industries have better positions in social network, the industries will have better creativity

Proposition 11. Industry environment will influence internal selection and external selection criteria setting..

Proposition 12. Internet industry environment is highly dynamic, therefore there are more active entrepreneurial activities in internet industry.

Proposition 13. The more hostile the latest stage of internet industry development is, the better creativity will show in this industry.

Proposition 14. Due to low commercialization cost and variety of consumers' preferences, internet industry have better creativity.

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