Abstract

As firms outsource non-core competencies, an increasing share of supply chain innovation must make use of intellectual property (IP) acquired through collaboration. When two or more IP bases can be combined for value greater than the sum of the individual knowledge stocks (super-additive) then the knowledge can be said to be complementary. Knowledge complementarity (KC) strongly influences how collaboration occurs. Specifically, there must be sufficient diversity between the IP bases for there to be a source of innovation while having enough knowledge overlap that there is a shared base of understanding between the collaborators. With knowledge diversity and overlap as dimensions, this research uses absorptive capacity as a theoretical perspective to develop a vector model to characterize supply chain innovation through KC.

This initial research-in-progress establishes a theoretical basis for later empirical work on relationships that generate new IP.

Keywords: Knowledge Sharing, Absorptive Capacity, Supply Chain Innovation, Vector Model