



Organizational design drivers to enable emergent creativity in web-based communities

Organizational
design drivers

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Abstract

Purpose – In the stream of works studying complexity from an organizational viewpoint, literature is focused mainly on describing new organizational forms (holonic organization, circular organization, virtual corporation, ...) and on conceptual works identifying new managerial principles to manage emergence (job enrichment, de-regulation, ...). But literature still lacks “actionable knowledge” on management of emergent processes. Therefore, the authors seek to propose an empirical analysis with the aim of finding the organizational design drivers that enable self-organization. As creativity could be understood as an important precondition for both adaptation and innovation in an age of complexity, the authors focus on creativity emergence process.

Design/methodology/approach – The analysis is based on a framework of self-organization principles. The authors derived it from the literature and used it to empirically analyse open innovation web-based platforms for creativity. They are deemed particularly important because their open and collaborative innovation process is often self-organized and their collaboration relationships seem to be loosely coupled. Therefore, they are a good ground to investigate the alternatives to managerial hierarchy and the knowledge-based organizations associated with emergence and self-organization.

Findings – The results highlight important organizational design choices to enable self-organization process: organic structure composed by activity systems to enable reconfiguration; roles enlargement and enrichment and cognitive diversity to enable redundancy; collaboration and participatory decision-making and social capital and networking to enable interconnection; values adaptation, motivations and rules to enable sharing principle.

Originality/value – The paper contributes to the empirical knowledge on emergence process, translating the principles of self-organization in managerial actions.

Keywords Emergence, Complexity, Creativity, Collective innovation, Open innovation web-based platforms, Collaboration, Complexity theory, Innovation

Paper type Case study

1. Introduction

The increasing complexity of society, the organizational changes and the value of the immaterial factors (relationships, meanings and aesthetics) have derived in the knowledge economy (Drucker, 1969; Rooney *et al.*, 2005). In this situation, organizations need then to co-evolve in changing environments, facing uncertainty

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