



H.F.R.I.
Hellenic Foundation for
Research & Innovation

Description of the funded research project
1st Call for H.F.R.I. Research Projects to Support Faculty
Members & Researchers and Procure High-Value
Research Equipment

Title of the research project:

Organizational learning and performance outcomes: A multilevel longitudinal study (ORGLEARN)

Principal Investigator:

Dr. Alexandros Papalexandris, Assistant Professor of Management

Reader-friendly title:

Organizational learning (ORGLEARN)

Scientific Area:

Social sciences (Organization Theory)

Institution and Country:

Athens University of Economics & Business, Greece

Host Institution:

Athens University of Economics & Business, Greece

Collaborating Institution(s):

University of Piraeus, Greece

Rotterdam School of Management, Erasmus University, Netherlands



Budget:

€ 152,350

Duration:

36 Months

Research Project Synopsis

- The main goal of this research is to design and empirically test a theoretically novel and practically relevant research model that *incorporates both the multilevel antecedents of organizational learning and by identifying and empirically testing the moderating factors* in the organizational learning – firm innovation and performance relationship.
 - First, this project focuses on the bottom-up effect that *individual-level integration mechanisms (i.e., internal and external social interactions/ties)* have on organizational learning, hence, tapping into the antecedents of organizational learning from a micro-level viewpoint. Also, by utilizing a *functional or departmental level* perspective, this research is one of the first to examine how learning emerges from lower (levels) to this level of analysis.
 - Second, there is considerable ambiguity related to the *contextual conditions* under which these relationships can be materialized. This research identifies and empirically tests *the moderating factors (i.e., CEO and board characteristics, environmental dynamism, and appropriability regimes)*, in the organizational learning – firm innovation and performance relationship.
- As such, this research aims to inform a wide range of stakeholders (e.g., top managers in organizations, the government, policy makers) about *ways in which organizations can use the concept and practices of learning to enhance their innovation output and achieve superior performance.*

Project originality

- Research on organizational learning has mainly focused on the business unit and team level of analysis, thereby, *lacking a microfoundations approach*.
 - This project employs *a multilevel design to identify the bottom-up effects of individual-level integration mechanisms* in fostering organizational learning.
- Most studies have theoretically proposed and empirically tested antecedents and outcomes of organizational learning, but have overlooked, to a large degree, *the contingent and boundary conditions under which organizational learning leads to competitive advantage*.
 - This project examines the contingent/boundary role of *individual and environmental characteristics* on the relationship between organizational learning and firm innovation and performance.
- Organizational learning is said to develop in a *path-dependent process*, however, there is shortage of attention to the *process aspects* of organizational learning.
 - This project theorizes that there is a path dependency (feedback loop) between previous and current learning and tests this relationship.
- Methodologically, the *existing measures that have been used to capture organizational learning do not “fully reflect the richness of the construct”*.
 - This project measures organizational learning through both existing/secondary data and primary data, thus, capturing to the largest extent its properties.

Expected results & Research Project Impact

The research will examine the impact of integration mechanisms, critical stakeholders and environmental variables on various aspects of a firm's performance. Hence, the study *will aid organizations in identifying critical determinants and boundary conditions of their performance and competitive advantage*. Specifically, it will help organizations to:

- *Develop knowledge capacity*. This research is expected to showcase how organizations continuously learn to innovate, thereby developing knowledge assets to attain sustainable performance returns.
- *Develop Dense Internal and External Social Networks*. The results of the study will inform practitioners about the importance of building rich internal and external social networks for expanding knowledge boundaries and increasing the pace of change in organizations.
- *Actively Involve the Top Management*. From a practical perspective, organizations will be able to determine the importance of the experience and power of management in achieving higher organizational performance, through strengthening the link between organizational learning and innovation.
- *Diagnose and Exploit Environmental Characteristics*. This research will enhance managers' understanding of the proper level of regimes of appropriability and environmental dynamism, needed to heighten firm performance.

The importance of this funding

The funding of HFRI *will support the research plan for the next three years* by:

- Providing the *financial resources that are needed to perform this demanding research plan*
- Allowing the *expansion of the research network* in three vital ways:
 - i) *Hiring* promising post-doc and PhD researcher(s)
 - ii) *Collaborating with* researchers in top-tier universities
 - iii) Attending leading *conferences* in the field
- Financing the necessary *equipment* (e.g., software for statistical analyses, computers etc.)
- Supporting the *visibility and publicity* of the newly established research group through the financing of the project's dissemination actions



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