Understanding Organizational Agility: a Work Design Perspective

Clyde Holsapple
Xun Li

Gatton College of Business & Economics
University of Kentucky

Acknowledgement: This research is sponsored in part by the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Networks and Information Integration, through its Command & Control Research Program and the Center for Edge Power at the Naval Postgraduate School.
OUTLINE

- Motivation
- Theoretical Background & Conceptual Models
- Planned Studies
- Future Studies
MOTIVATION

Why should we study agility?
Prior Agility Studies

- **Definition Issue**: the concept of agility is ambiguous (Giachetti et al. 2003)

- **Boundary Issue**: intra-organization focus (Yusuf et al. 1999)

- **Process Issue**: static view on agility (Dove 2005)

- **Operationalization Issue**: few empirical model testing studies
New Research Focus

- **Concept advances**: new conceptual models and Systematic hypothesis testing

- **A network view**: within and across organizations

- **A Process view**: dynamic and evolving
Research Questions

I. What is agility?

II. What is organizational agility?

III. How does an organization achieve and sustain organizational agility?
THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

- Social Network Theories
- Entrepreneurship Theories
- Theory of Dynamic Capabilities

- Network Entrepreneurship
- Entrepreneurial Work Design Perspective

- Network Inertia
- Study of Organizational Agility
NEW CONCEPTUAL MODELS

- A unified view of agility
- A work design model of organizational agility
- A path model for agile work design
- A conceptual framework for agility-facilitating platform—Organizational agility
A Unified View of Agility

Agility is the result of integrating an alertness to changes (opportunities/challenges) – both internal and environmental – with a capability to use resources in responding (proactive/reactive) to such changes, all in a timely, flexible, affordable, relevant manner.

Gauging Agility

- **Agility Degree**: gauged by timeliness and flexibility
- **Agility Effectiveness**: gauged by degree, relevance, and affordability
A Work Design Model of Organizational Agility

- Strategic Design Agility
- Operational Design Agility
- Episodic Design Agility
An Entrepreneurial Path for Agile Work Design

Participating Organizations

Work Network

collaborate as a

Fluid Participants

composed by

Static Participants

Work-design Team (one-shot)

Work Systems

uses

Work-design Network

commits

Organizational Agility

Influence

entrepreneurially designs

and re-designs
An Agility-Performance Model in Supply Network

- Strategic Design Agility
- Operational Design Agility
- Episodic Design Agility

Organizational Agility

Organizational Performance
PLANNED STUDIES

- **Study 1**: Case Study
- **Study 2**: Industry Study
- **Study 3**: Survey Study
Study 1: Case Study

- A Fortune Top-100 company
- Consumer goods sector
- Informant: Director of Supply Network Design
Study 1: Summary of Informant’s Key Points

- Understanding organizational agility
- The role of work design in achieving organizational agility
- What are the traits of participants with whom you have collaborated in work design?
- How to stay alert?
- What are the practices to cope with inertia?
Table 1. Company J’s work design governance pattern for organizational agility

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strategic Work Design</th>
<th>Operational Work Design</th>
<th>Episodic Work Design</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PEG</td>
<td>NG</td>
<td>SDG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proactive</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reactive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Simultaneity of work design at three levels</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Supply Chain Network Agility</td>
<td>High</td>
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</tbody>
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(Note: PEG refers to participant engagement governance, NG is network governance, SDG is system dynamic governance)
Managerial Implications

Achieve Organizational Agility Through Work Design Agility

Using Work Design as Powerful Tools to Achieve\Maintain Performance
FUTURE STUDIES

- Continue Case Study
- Industry study
- Survey Study
- Simulation Study
Questions or comments?