

ABSTRACT

Determinants of the Open Innovation Model for Trinidad and Tobago: A Case Study of the Food and Beverage Cluster

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Open innovation theory debate have mostly been studied in high-tech multinational firms in developed countries but has received little or no attention in the academic spectrum within Trinidad and Tobago. Review of literature states that firms are a locus for innovative activity and that open innovation is a developmental vehicle for firms progress towards achieving sustainability. This thesis aims to investigate the determinants to open innovation practices in small and medium sized enterprises especially the Food and Beverage cluster, a leading sector of the manufacturing industry in a developing country as Trinidad and Tobago. In order to identify the determinants of Open Innovation and the obstacles to firms' innovative behavior, a mixed method approach was conducted comprising of a survey, interviews and case study analysis.

Empirical findings indicate that firms adopt the determinants of networking, acquisition of technology, sharing of knowledge and skills through the acquisition of license to remain competitive and sustainable. However, most firms' innovation process are hindered by the lack of incentives, government support mechanisms and cooperation partners. Emerging from this, a proposed conceptual framework based upon an interactive network of feedback loops and mechanisms which integrates a collaborative and shared knowledge framework based on "Open Innovation paradigm", is presented. It signals the importance of stakeholders for driving network development and Open Innovation practices as well as the need of new competencies to be developed by all players. The framework is evaluated for effectiveness through the presentation of case studies which further illustrates the adoption of a pro-innovation culture within this cluster in Trinidad and Tobago.

The findings contribute to the scarce literature on open innovation practices in the local environment and sheds light on the factors that can either foster a culture for open innovation or hinder a firm's innovative capability.

Keywords: Cavelle Motilal, open innovation, food and beverage industry, innovation management and models, small and medium enterprises