

THE ROLE OF RELATIONSHIP IN INFORMATION SHARING AND COMMUNICATION BETWEEN ORGANIZATION: A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: This paper investigates the attributes of relationship as antecedents of information sharing and communication in inter-firm collaborative relationships and develops a conceptual framework depicting their roles in business partnership in Asian context. The study focuses on manufacturing firms in Asian countries

Design/methodology/approach: A thorough review of extant literature was conducted to investigate the various attributes of relationship and their roles in information sharing and communication. Taking into account the difference of business culture in Asian countries, we contend that current models and frameworks examining information sharing and communication between collaborative organizations, which are mostly developed for developed economies, may not be totally applicable in the Asian business environment. The comprehensive literature review enabled us to develop a conceptual framework for investigating the roles of relationship attributes as antecedents of information sharing and communication in inter-firm collaborative relationship in the Asian context.

Findings: Based on social exchange theory, we identified from the literature various factors, such as trust, commitment, power, and reciprocity, as key attributes of relationship. They form the antecedents of inter-organizational information sharing and communication. Also doing business in Asian context, inter-firm relationships involve significant amount of personal and organizational interactions. We therefore proposed that both inter-personal and inter-organizational forms of trust would need to be considered in the process of sharing information and communicating between collaborative firms. Hypotheses on relationships between the various attributes, information sharing and communication were also put forward.

Research limitations/implications: This study is conceptual in nature and needs to be supported by empirical evidence. The proposed conceptual framework can be validated in future studies using quantitative research techniques. Also, this study focuses only on manufacturing industry in Asian countries. Future research can include other industries to enhance generalizability of the findings.

Originality/value: The paper establishes the connections from relationship factors to information sharing and communication between collaborative firms which have been researched individually or in group but not in a holistic manner. It therefore contributes to the understanding of the roles of relationship attributes in collaborative relationships. It also provides insights and guidance for practitioners in the manufacturing industry in Asian countries for the formation and development of information sharing and communication with business partnerships.

Keywords: information sharing, communication, relationship attributes, manufacturing industry, Asian countries.