STAKEHOLDER-FOCUSED ORGANIZATIONAL LEARNING, RESPONSIVENESS AND INNOVATION / IMITATION

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ABSTRACT

Success in the global marketplace is increasingly determined by the information and know-how organizations possess. While valuable research contributions have been made concerning how organizations learn about their customers, much remains unknown about how organizations learn about multiple stakeholders. This is unfortunate given the increasing importance organizations place on meeting their stakeholders' demands. In addition, previous research has failed to account for the alternative mechanisms organizations use to acquire information about the market. To address these gaps in the literature, this study examines whether stakeholder-focused organizational learning influences the organization's propensity to take action in response to its stakeholders' needs. It also investigates if the knowledge acquisition mechanisms the organization relies on to acquire stakeholder-related knowledge determine how innovative or imitative its stakeholder practices are. The empirical analysis based on the responses of 349 marketing and supply chain management executives to an online survey reveal that the four organizational learning processes (i.e., knowledge acquisition, information distribution, information interpretation, and organizational memory) have a direct effect on stakeholder-focused responsiveness. The results also indicate that while experiential knowledge acquisition is related to innovative stakeholder practices, vicarious knowledge acquisition is related to imitative ones.

References available upon request