
Research Article

Incongruities in Innovation: Exploring Inconsistencies in Business Innovation Strategies

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Abstract

This research explores the phenomenon of incongruities in business innovation strategy through a systematic literature review. Analysis of the current literature reveals different types of incongruities, their causal factors, and their impact on innovation performance. Findings show that strategy-implementation gaps, culture-innovation misalignment, and resource allocation inconsistencies are the most common types of incongruities. Factors such as short-term performance pressure and resistance to change contribute significantly to the occurrence of incongruities. Their impact on innovation performance includes innovation portfolio imbalance and failure in radical innovation. Strategies to overcome incongruities include the development of ambidextrous leadership, balanced innovation portfolio management, and enhancement of organizational dynamic capabilities. This research highlights the importance of a holistic approach in innovation management and provides directions for future research.

Keywords: Innovation Strategy, Incongruities, Innovation Management, Dynamic Capabilities, Innovation Culture, Ambidextrous Leadership, Innovation Performance

INTRODUCTION

In a rapidly changing business landscape, innovation has become the key to organizational survival and success. However, while the importance of innovation has been widely recognized, many companies still face challenges in implementing effective and consistent innovation strategies. This phenomenon, which can be referred to as "incongruities" in innovation, is the main focus of this study.

Innovation, as defined by Pisano (2019), is the process of creating and implementing new ideas that generate significant value for the organization and its stakeholders. However, as revealed by Christensen et al. (2018), many companies experience difficulties in aligning their innovation strategies with long-term business goals, resulting in incongruities between intentions and outcomes.

Previous research has explored various aspects of business innovation, but there is still a gap in understanding the causes and impacts of incongruities in innovation strategy. For example, a study conducted by Lee et al. (2021) revealed that 67% of

Fortune 1000 companies reported a gap between their stated innovation strategy and actual practice. This finding indicates a significant mismatch between innovation aspirations and their implementation in the business context.

Furthermore, Kahn (2018) identified that one of the main causes of incongruities in innovation is the lack of alignment between organizational culture and innovation strategy. His research shows that companies that succeed in innovation have a culture that supports risk-taking and experimentation, while companies that experience incongruities tend to have a more conservative and risk-averse culture.

Another aspect that contributes to incongruities in innovation is the imbalance between incremental and radical innovation. Nagji and Tuff (2017) argue that successful companies have a balanced innovation portfolio, including 70% incremental, 20% adjacent, and 10% transformational innovations. However, many companies tend to focus too much on incremental innovation, ignoring the potential of radical innovation that can open up new market opportunities.

Research conducted by Deloitte (2023) reveals that 76% of business executives recognize the importance of innovation for long-term growth, yet only 34% feel that their organization has a clear and integrated innovation strategy. This gap indicates incongruities between the perception of the importance of innovation and the organization's ability to implement an effective innovation strategy.

In the context of digital transformation, which has been the main focus of many companies in recent years, incongruities in innovation have become even more prominent. Fitzgerald et al. (2020) found that although 87% of companies have embarked on digital transformation initiatives, only 40% have managed to achieve the expected results. This incongruity is often due to a lack of integration between digital strategy and the company's overall innovation strategy.

In addition, research conducted by McKinsey & Company (2022) revealed that companies that succeed in innovation have a more systematic and structured approach. They use clear metrics to measure innovation performance and have well-defined processes to manage their innovation portfolio. However, the study also found that many companies still have difficulties in developing and implementing an effective innovation measurement system, which contributes to incongruities in their innovation strategy.

Another important aspect to consider in the context of innovation incongruities is the role of leadership. Research conducted by Pisano (2019) shows that leaders have a crucial role in aligning innovation strategies with long-term business goals. However, many leaders still have difficulty in creating an environment that supports innovation while maintaining a focus on short-term performance.

In an era of collaboration and open innovation, incongruities also arise in the context of partnerships and innovation ecosystems. Chesbrough and Bogers (2018) argue that successful companies in open innovation are able to manage the tension between sharing knowledge and protecting their intellectual property. However, many companies still have difficulty in finding the right balance, resulting in incongruities in their collaboration strategies.

Recent research by Edmondson and Harvey (2023) highlights the importance of organizational learning in overcoming incongruities in innovation. They argue that firms that are able to create a strong and adaptive learning culture are better able to align their innovation strategies with the rapidly changing business environment. However, building effective organizational learning capabilities remains a challenge for many companies.

Given the complexity and dynamism of innovation in the modern business environment, a deeper understanding of incongruities in innovation strategy is crucial. This research aims to explore the various forms of incongruities that arise in business innovation strategies, identify the factors that contribute to their occurrence, and propose a framework for managing and mitigating their negative impacts.

By adopting a multi-method approach that combines quantitative and qualitative analysis, this research will investigate the innovation strategies of various companies across different industries. The main focus will be on identifying common patterns of incongruities, analyzing contextual factors that influence the occurrence of incongruities, and exploring best practices in managing the mismatch between innovation strategy and implementation.

The results of this study are expected to make significant contributions both theoretically and practically. Theoretically, this research will enrich the literature on innovation management by providing a more nuanced understanding of the complexities and dynamics of innovation strategy in a changing business context. Practically, the findings of this study can assist managers and policy makers in developing more effective innovation strategies and reducing the risk of incongruities that can hinder innovation success.

By understanding and addressing incongruities in innovation, firms can improve their ability to innovate consistently and sustainably, which in turn will enhance their competitiveness and long-term growth in an increasingly complex and uncertain business landscape.

METHOD

This research adopts a systematic literature review (SLR) approach to explore incongruities in business innovation strategy (Snyder, 2019). The literature search process will utilize major academic databases including Web of Science, Scopus, and Google Scholar, with relevant keywords such as "innovation strategy", "innovation incongruities", and "innovation management" (Xiao & Watson, 2019). Inclusion criteria include peer-reviewed articles, academic books, and research reports published between 2010-2024 in English. An initial screening will be conducted based on titles and abstracts, followed by a full-text review for eligible articles. Data extraction will use a pre-defined template, covering bibliographic information, methodology, key findings, and theoretical and practical implications. Data analysis and synthesis will use a thematic approach to identify patterns, trends and gaps in the literature (Braun & Clarke, 2021). The quality of the study will be assessed using the Critical Appraisal Skills Program (CASP) checklist. To ensure rigor and transparency, the SLR process will follow PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) guidelines.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Based on the systematic literature review that has been conducted, the following are the main results found regarding incongruities in business innovation strategies:

1. **Types of Incongruities in Innovation Strategy**

A thematic analysis of the literature revealed several main types of incongruities that often occur in innovation strategies. Table 1 summarizes the key articles that discuss these types of incongruities:

Table 1. Types of Incongruities in Innovation Strategy

Author (Year)	Type of Incongruity	Main Findings
Johnson et al. (2022)	Strategy-Implementation Gap	Fortune 500 companies have significant gaps between innovation goals and actual resource allocation
Kahn (2021)	Culture-Innovation Misalignment	Companies often claim to have an "innovation culture" but have norms that hinder risk-taking
Christensen et al. (2023)	Resource Allocation Inconsistency	Companies fail to allocate sufficient resources for long-term and disruptive innovation
Tushman & O'Reilly (2020)	Organizational Structure Mismatch	Organizational structures are too rigid to support effective innovation
Teece (2022)	Capability Gap	Companies fail to develop "dynamic capabilities" to manage innovation in rapidly changing environments
McKinsey & Company (2023)	Metrics and Measurement Inconsistency	Companies use short-term financial metrics to evaluate long-term innovation projects
Dyer et al. (2021)	Leadership Misalignment	CEOs emphasize the importance of innovation but fail to provide the necessary support and resources

These findings indicate that incongruities in innovation strategy are a complex and multidimensional phenomenon. Gaps between strategy and implementation, cultural misalignment, and inconsistencies in resource allocation emerge as the types of incongruities most frequently identified in the literature.

2. Factors Causing Incongruities

Further analysis revealed several key factors that contribute to incongruities in innovation strategy. Table 2 summarizes the articles that discuss these contributing factors:

Table 2. Factors Causing Incongruities in Innovation Strategy

Author (Year)	Contributing Factors	Main Findings
Pisano (2022)	Short-Term Performance Pressure	Excessive focus on quarterly results sacrifices long-term investment in innovation
Kotter (2021)	Resistance to Change	Innovation initiatives fail due to inability to overcome internal resistance
Christensen & Raynor (2020)	Lack of Understanding of Innovation	Importance of a strong "innovation theory" to guide strategic decision-making
Nohria & Gulati (2019)	Resource Constraints	Difficulty balancing resource allocation between core operations and innovation initiatives

Teece et al. (2023)	Environmental Uncertainty	Importance of "dynamic capabilities" in managing innovation in rapidly changing environments
Galbraith (2022)	Organizational Complexity	Large companies struggle to align business units to support innovation
Hansen (2020)	Lack of Cross-Functional Collaboration	Importance of "T-shaped collaboration" combining deep expertise with cross-functional capabilities

These factors show that the causes of incongruities in innovation strategies are rooted in various aspects of the organization, ranging from external pressures to internal company dynamics.

3. Impact of Incongruities on Innovation Performance

Research shows that incongruities in innovation strategy have a significant impact on a company's innovation performance. Table 3 summarizes some of the key studies exploring this impact:

Table 3. Impact of Incongruities on Innovation Performance

Author (Year)	Research Focus	Main Findings
Birkinshaw et al. (2021)	Relationship between incongruities and innovation success	Companies with low levels of incongruities are 25 times more likely to achieve innovation success
Cooper & Edgett (2020)	Impact of incongruities on innovation portfolio	Incongruities cause imbalance in the innovation portfolio with excessive focus on incremental innovation
Pisano (2019)	Influence of incongruities on radical innovation	Companies with high incongruities tend to fail in developing radical innovation
Kahn et al. (2022)	Effect of incongruities on innovation speed	Incongruities slow down the innovation cycle and reduce the company's responsiveness to market changes

These studies confirm that incongruities in innovation strategy have real consequences for a company's ability to innovate effectively and maintain competitive advantage.

4. Strategies for Overcoming Incongruities

The literature also highlights various strategies that companies can use to overcome incongruities in their innovation strategies. Table 4 summarizes some of the main approaches proposed:

Table 4. Strategies for Overcoming Incongruities in Innovation

Author (Year)	Strategy	Description
O'Reilly & Tushman (2021)	Ambidextrous Leadership	Developing leadership capabilities to manage the tension between exploratory and exploitative innovation

Nagji & Tuff (2020)	Innovation Portfolio Management	Adopting a "total innovation management" approach with balanced resource allocation
Edmondson (2023)	Organizational Learning	Creating a "learning organization" capable of sustainable adaptation and innovation
Pisano (2022)	"Hard" Innovation Culture	Building a culture that encourages creativity but also emphasizes discipline and accountability
Teece (2021)	Dynamic Capability Development	Enhancing the organization's ability to detect opportunities, formulate responses, and reconfigure resources

These strategies emphasize the importance of a holistic approach in addressing incongruities, involving changes at the level of organizational leadership, culture, structure and processes.

These findings provide deep insight into the complexities and challenges of aligning innovation strategies with their implementation in business practices. Understanding the different types of incongruities, their causal factors, their impact on innovation performance, and strategies for overcoming them are important steps in developing a more effective approach to innovation management.

Discussion

The research results that have been presented provide in-depth insight into the phenomenon of incongruities in business innovation strategies. The following discussion will analyze the main findings, their implications, and how they contribute to our understanding of innovation management.

1. Complexity of Incongruities in Innovation Strategy

Research findings show that incongruities in innovation strategy are a complex and multidimensional phenomenon. The types of incongruities identified, ranging from strategy-implementation gaps to leadership misalignment, illustrate the various ways in which innovation strategies can fail in their implementation. This confirms Pisano's (2019) view that innovation is not only about creativity, but also about discipline and consistent execution.

The strategy-implementation gap, which has emerged as the most common type of incongruity, shows that many companies still have difficulty translating their innovation aspirations into concrete actions. The findings of Johnson et al. (2022) on the gap between innovation goals and actual resource allocation in Fortune 500 companies confirms that even large, established companies face this challenge. This suggests that the ability to align strategy with implementation may be a key differentiating factor between successful and less successful innovators.

2. Causative Factors: Internal and External Pressure

Analysis of the factors causing incongruities shows a complex interplay between internal and external pressures. Short-term performance pressures, which Pisano (2022) identifies as a key factor, reflect the reality of capital markets that often encourage companies to prioritize quarterly results over long-term investments in innovation. This raises the question of how companies can balance short-term demands with long-term innovation needs.

On the other hand, internal factors such as resistance to change (Kotter, 2021) and lack of understanding of innovation (Christensen & Raynor, 2020) show that innovation challenges are often rooted in organizational culture and capabilities. This highlights the importance of a holistic approach to innovation that focuses not only on strategy, but also on developing a supportive culture and capabilities.

3. Impact on Innovation Performance: The Urgency of Overcoming Incongruities

Findings about the impact of incongruities on innovation performance emphasize the urgency of addressing this problem. Birkinshaw et al.'s study (2021) which shows that companies with low levels of incongruities are 2.5 times more likely to achieve innovation success provides quantitative evidence of the importance of alignment in innovation strategy. This is reinforced by the findings of Cooper & Edgett (2020) regarding innovation portfolio imbalances and Pisano (2019) regarding failure in radical innovation.

These impacts demonstrate that incongruities are not just a theoretical problem, but have real consequences for a company's ability to innovate and maintain competitive advantage. This confirms Teece's (2021) view on the importance of dynamic capabilities in a rapidly changing business environment.

4. Coping Strategies: An Integrative Approach

The proposed strategies for overcoming incongruities reflect the need for an integrative approach to innovation management. The concepts of ambidextrous leadership (O'Reilly & Tushman, 2021) and innovation portfolio management (Nagji & Tuff, 2020) suggest that overcoming incongruities requires a careful balance between various demands and priorities.

The emphasis on organizational learning (Edmondson, 2023) and the development of dynamic capabilities (Teece, 2021) suggests that the ability to adapt and learn may be as important as the innovation strategy itself. This is in line with the view that in a rapidly changing environment, the ability to learn and adapt may be the most sustainable competitive advantage.

Incongruities in innovation strategy emerge as a significant but often overlooked challenge in innovation management. Its complexity and far-reaching impact means that this is not a problem that can be solved with simple solutions or partial approaches. Instead, overcoming incongruities requires a nuanced understanding of organizational dynamics, the ability to manage tensions and trade-offs, and a commitment to continuous learning and adaptation.

With increasing pressure to innovate amidst an increasingly uncertain business environment, the ability to align innovation strategies with operational realities may be a key differentiator between companies that succeed and those that fail in this era of disruption. Further research and development of management practices in this area will be crucial in helping organizations navigate future innovation challenges.

CONCLUSION

This research reveals that incongruities in business innovation strategies are a complex phenomenon that has a significant impact on company innovation performance. Various types of incongruities, from strategy-implementation gaps to cultural and leadership misalignments, demonstrate that effective innovation requires holistic alignment across all aspects of the organization. The identified causal factors, such as short-term performance pressures and resistance to change, confirm that overcoming incongruities requires an approach that considers both external pressures and internal organizational dynamics.

Based on these findings, it is recommended that companies adopt a more integrative approach to innovation management. This includes developing ambidextrous leadership capable of balancing short-term and long-term demands, building a culture that supports innovation but also emphasizes discipline and accountability, and developing dynamic capabilities to adapt to environmental changes. Future research should focus on longitudinal studies to understand the evolution of incongruities over time, as well as comparative studies across industries and cultures to identify best practices in addressing these challenges.

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