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MANAGEMENT OF SERVICE INNOVATION QUALITY

Mu, Y.

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Summary

The relevance of service innovation has been widely acknowledged by both scholars and practitioners. Although academic research of service innovation has developed for over three decades, there remains a need for a better understanding of some vital service innovation issues.

First, despite the growth of literature and practices in organizations, the knowledge of service innovation management remains relatively weak about its components, for example, of both project-level service innovation process and organization-level contextual factors. Second, the majority of research on service innovation performance takes a market/outcome perspective, with comparably fewer attempts to empirically address the operational/process performance. Third, the topic of service innovation categorization has received extensive attention in the literature, through primarily identifying either their degree of change or type of change. More insights are needed into the integration of the two streams.

The central question guiding this dissertation is: How do organizations effectively manage service innovations with quality outcomes, in various service categories? To address this question, four studies are conducted with regard to the related topics: service innovation management, quality, and categorization.

Firstly, based on a case study at Ctrip, the largest online travel agency in China, Chapter 2 proposes a framework of ‘service innovation management’. This management framework is achieved through refining an existing model from the field of new service development and covering the success factors of service innovation.

Secondly, Chapters 3–4 explore the operational performance of service innovation orientated by quality, in terms of ‘service innovation quality’. Empirical studies based on data from 168 service innovation projects in Dutch healthcare organizations reveal that, service innovativeness, organizational renewal, frontline employee involvement in idea generation and top management involvement in idea application are four significant antecedents of service innovation quality. Besides, the role of service innovativeness as a moderator in the relationship between employee involvement in ideation and service innovation quality is investigated in Chapter 4.

Thirdly, based on a multiple-case study in tourism (specifically theme parks and airlines), Chapter 5 offers a novel ‘service innovation categorization’ for labeling various service innovation categories. This proposed categorization simultaneously concerns the degree and type of change in a single model, and provides an optimized classification scheme.

The findings in this dissertation offer opportunities for further research on the components

of service innovation management, the antecedents of service innovation quality, and service innovation categorization as well as its classification scheme. Useful practical implications related to the topics are also provided.