

(3) Can We Win Them All? Benefits and Costs of Structured Compared with Flexible Innovation-Implementation Approaches

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Aims: Bureaucratic job structuring was compared with person-job integration in an attempt to determine which of the two approaches was a better means for innovation implementation in the workplace. The solution was hypothesized to be complex, depending on the criteria chosen for innovation effectiveness.

Method: Seventy incumbents of new linking roles in healthcare organizations were recruited. They provided data on the innovation-implementation approach applied in their case. Measures for different stakeholders' perceptions of innovation effectiveness were gathered. Three colleagues of the incumbents provided performance appraisals, reflecting internal customers criteria for innovation effectiveness, each incumbent completed questionnaire about burnout as a reversed proxy of innovation effectiveness, and semi-structured observations of incumbents' activities provided an index of the fit between their role behaviors and role requirement, reflecting external customers' criteria for effectiveness.

Results: While performance appraisals were found to gain most from implementation through bureaucratic job structuring, the fit between incumbents' role behaviors and role requirement benefited most from implementation through person-job integration. Decreased burnout required maximizing the two implementation processes.

Conclusion: These findings point to possible tradeoffs between the different criteria for innovation effectiveness, and call for combining features from the two implementation processes to produce a superior implementation approach.

Key words: Innovation implementation, bureaucratic job structuring, person-job integration, innovation effectiveness, linking roles /Health administration.