Introduction – Innovation science as an area of research

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In 2010 the Swedish National Agency for Higher Education granted Halmstad University the right to create a program for education and examination of Ph.D. students in the discipline of Innovations science. Innovation science as area of research has at Halmstad University been understood as a combination of the perspectives of different disciplines with a common focus on the management and organizing of the processes through which innovations emerge or are promoted or created, diffused and adopted, while creating markets and business opportunities for innovations. The disciplines that are most closely related to innovation science at Halmstad University are business administration, entrepreneurship, marketing, industrial management, strategy, and product development studies, but there are also other disciplines related to the area, such as political science, sociology, social work and health studies.

Internationally, innovation science is a comparatively new area of research. This may sound challenging, considering all the research efforts made in the areas of innovation, innovation systems and innovation management. Peter Drucker, as one of the pioneers, has been focused on the concept of innovation since the 1950s. He proposed that innovation as processes should be managed like all other corporate functions and be subject to systematic analysis both inside and outside the corporation and industry (Drucker 2002).

The first international scientific journal directly addressing innovation science issues, International Journal of Innovation Science, was launched in March 2009. The editors of the journal declared that the vision of the journal is “to adopt a systemic approach to understanding the innovation process, and facilitate the development of the Science of Innovation”. The editors shared Drucker’s view that innovation is not the creation of a single genius, even if that also might occur. Their view is that innovation is something that is possible to manage, promote and support.

Innovation science, then, is a rather broad area of research, but the focus is placed on the activities and efforts of the firm, an industry or another actor to manage processes in which new innovations are created and successfully deployed on a market or in society.

There are many types of innovations. Important types of innovations are new products and services developed by corporations—sometimes called technological innovations. Phillips (2009) has proposed ten facets, or aspect of this type of innovations. One group of aspects concerns the corporation’s strategic aim and the structures developed to support the innovation process. Among the aspects of this group she suggests the use of internal and external resources (e.g. open innovation), “secret” development groups (“skunk-works”), and a choice between centralized or decentralized management of the innovation processes.

A second group of aspects concern the type of innovations aimed for and the organizing of innovation teams. For example, the aim might be to focus on incremental or disruptive innovations. A third group of aspects is directly related to the innovation process
and its structure, for example the use of incentives in the process and the use of cross-functional teams and networks. (Phillips 2009).

There are, however, also other terminologies and conceptualizations of innovations of interest to the area of innovations science, for example social innovations. These innovations concern changes at societal level, intended to solve perceived societal problems or to enhance well-being in society. Phills has proposed the following definition of a social innovation:

*Any novel and useful solution to a social need or problem, that is better than existing approaches (i.e., more effective, efficient, sustainable, or just) and for which the value created (benefits) accrues primarily to society as a whole rather than private individuals.* (Phills 2009)

There are also organizational and administrative innovations. The innovations then concern change or introduction of new ideas within an organization or an administrative structure. Daft defines organizational innovations as “the adoption of a new idea or behaviour by an organization” while an administrative innovations “pertains to the policies of recruitment, allocation of resources, and the structuring of tasks, authority and reward.” (Daft 1978). Examples of innovations of these types may be the adoption of the new idea to divide an organization’s economic activities into divisions, called the M-Form (Teece 1980), and the diffusion of Total Quality Management (Ravichandran 2000) or “downsizing” of organizations (Budros 2000).

Innovation, then, is something that concerns different activities and actors in corporations and in society as a whole. Innovation science must relate to this multitude of facets. That is a reason why a multidisciplinary approach is to prefer, as proposed by the Halmstad University innovation scientists.

In the following chapters some of these member scientists of the Centre of Technology, Innovation and Marketing Management (CTIM) present their research. They present their perspectives of an innovation science at Halmstad University.

The first chapters concern different aspects of innovations. Sandberg discusses the possibilities of studying the diffusion of eco-innovations in Sweden by means of available national databases. Altmann et al. explore human resource management activities, functions and processes that enhance or impede innovativeness in firms. Wictor and Andersson focus on the vision of entrepreneurs and how these visions influence decisions in born-global firms. Hoveskog focuses on innovation related activities in low-tech industries and the specific capabilities related to that. Rundquist discusses decisions of firms to outsource product development. Tell explores the relationships between Higher Education Institutions and companies in the field of management studies and presents a model used by Halmstad School of innovation. Florén summarizes the results of several research projects aiming to understand small-firm growth. In the last chapter Awuah and Reinert presents some results from a study of images potential tourists have about the tourist destination Brazil. Ibland lite kortfattat om bidragen, några mer kommentarer hade passat

**References**


Drucker P. (2002). The discipline of innovation. *Harvard Management Review, 80*(8); 95-


