

Topics for Bachelor Theses for Business Education Students at the Chair of Organization & Innovation

FSS 2023

You can choose among the 12 topics described below. Preferences will be collected after the inaugural meeting.

Introduction to academic writing (inaugural meeting):

Tuesday, February 28th 2022, 14:00 – 17:00h, Room 409, L9 1-2.

TOPIC 1:

Gender differences in coopetition

Geschlechterunterschiede in kooperativem Verhalten

Related literature:

Tsai, W. (2002). Social structure of “coopetition” within a multiunit organization: Coordination, competition, and intraorganizational knowledge sharing. *Organization science*, 13(2), 179-190.

Abstract:

Drawing on a social network perspective of organizational coordination, this paper investigates the effectiveness of coordination mechanisms on knowledge sharing in intraorganizational networks that consist of both collaborative and competitive ties among organizational units. Internal knowledge sharing within a multiunit organization requires formal hierarchical structure and informal lateral relations as coordination mechanisms. Using sociometric techniques, this paper analyzes how formal hierarchical structure and informal lateral relations influence knowledge sharing and how interunit competition moderates the association between such coordination mechanisms and knowledge sharing in a large, multiunit company. Results show that formal hierarchical structure, in the form of centralization, has a significant negative effect on knowledge sharing, and informal lateral relations, in the form of social interaction, have a significant positive effect on knowledge sharing among units that compete with each other for market share, but not among units that compete with each other for internal resources.

TOPIC 2:

How does the radicalness of an idea affect its diffusion?

Wie beeinflusst die Radikalität einer Idee ihre Diffusion?

Related literature:

Deichmann, D., Moser, C., Birkholz, J. M., Nerghes, A., Groenewegen, P., & Wang, S. (2020). Ideas with impact: How connectivity shapes idea diffusion. *Research policy*, 49(1), 103881.

Abstract:

Despite a growing body of research on idea diffusion, there is a lack of knowledge on why some ideas successfully diffuse and stand out from the crowd while others do not surface or remain unnoticed. We address this question by looking into the characteristics of an idea, specifically its connectivity in a content network. In a content network, ideas connect to other ideas through their content—the words that the ideas have in common. We hypothesize that a high connectivity of an idea in a content network is beneficial for idea diffusion because this idea will more likely be conceived as novel yet at the same time also as more useful because it appears as more familiar to the audience. Moreover, we posit that a high social connectivity of the team working on the idea further enhances the effect of high content connectivity on idea diffusion. Our study focuses on academic conference publications and the co-authorship data of a community of computer science researchers from 2006 to 2012. We find confirmation for our hypotheses and discuss the implications of these findings.

TOPIC 3:

How can artificial intelligence influence the innovation process?

Wie kann künstliche Intelligenz den Innovationsprozess beeinflussen?

Related literature:

Von Krogh, G. (2018). Artificial intelligence in organizations: New opportunities for phenomenon-based theorizing. *Academy of Management Discoveries*.

Abstract:

Artificial intelligence (AI) is a rapidly emerging phenomenon of economic and organizational significance. The article offers a brief introduction to AI in organizations and proposes that the functioning of these systems relevant to organizations, entails task input (data: sound, text, images, and numbers), task processes (algorithms), and task outputs (solutions and decisions). By considering such functions in organizations, new research opportunities emerge in the areas of decision-making and problem-solving. Advancing academic work in these areas is of key importance at this particular moment in time, and should ultimately aim at helping practitioners adopt an informed, prudent, and realistic approach to AI.

TOPIC 4:

The role of anonymity in idea evaluation - ideator vs. evaluator anonymity

Die Rolle von Anonymität in der Bewertung von Ideen

Related literature:

Connolly, T., Jessup, L. M., & Valacich, J. S. (1990). Effects of anonymity and evaluative tone on idea generation in computer-mediated groups. *Management science*, 36(6), 689-703.

Abstract:

A laboratory experiment was used to evaluate the effects of anonymity and evaluative tone on computer-mediated groups using a group decision support system to perform an idea-generation task. Evaluative tone was manipulated through a confederate group member who entered supportive or critical comments into the automated brainstorming system. Groups working anonymously and with a critical confederate produced the greatest number of original solutions and overall comments, yet

average solution quality per item and average solution rarity were not different across conditions. Identified groups working with a supportive confederate were the most satisfied and had the highest levels of perceived effectiveness, but produced the fewest original solutions and overall comments.

TOPIC 5:

No "see you later"- How do temporary teams differ from non-temporary teams in terms of trust and cohesion?

Kein "Bis später" - Wie unterscheiden sich temporäre von nicht-temporären Teams in Bezug auf Vertrauen und Zusammenhalt?

Related literature:

Valentine, M. (2018). When Equity Seems Unfair: The Role of Justice Enforceability in Temporary Team Coordination. *Academy of Management Journal*, 61(6), 2081–2105.
<https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2016.1101>

Abstract:

Temporary teams can accomplish tightly coupled complex work even without the shared experience that enables coordination in longstanding teams. To advance understanding of this process, I conducted an inductive study of temporary teams in four hospital emergency departments (EDs), and found that the teams in two EDs coordinated effectively, but the teams in the other two EDs did not. To theorize an explanation, I draw on the organizational justice literature and introduce the idea of justice enforceability, defined as the perception that authorities can act fairly, given the potential for other people to cheat. The team members' perceptions of justice enforceability were focused on whether the distribution of work within and between teams was fair or could be cheated. When team members perceived that justice was enforceable, they were willing to engage in the extra-role behaviors that wove together their individual responsibilities. But when they perceived that cheating was possible, they avoided the extra-role behaviors that would have made them suckers for working hard while others cheated. Justice enforceability thus resolves a common tension in temporary teams, namely that the potential for uneven effort can undermine team coordination. In these ED teams, members only trusted that authorities could act fairly when the distribution of work was exactly equal; then team members felt they were all "in it together," and each put in the work to coordinate as a team.

TOPIC 6:

Change of the team setting: Transformation from being a face-to-face to a being (fully) virtual team. - Implications for team processes and performance.

Wechsel des Team-Settings: Transformation eines face-to-face Teams zu einem (vollständig) virtuellen Team - Implikationen für Teamprozesse und -performance

Related literature:

Townsend, A. M., DeMarie, S. M., & Hendrickson, A. R. (1998). Virtual teams: Technology and the workplace of the future. *Academy of Management Perspectives*, 12(3), 17-29.

Abstract:

Managers are challenged to develop strategically flexible organizations in response to increasingly competitive marketplaces. Fortunately, a new generation of information and telecommunications technology provides the foundation for resilient new organizational forms that would have not been feasible only a decade ago. One of the most exciting of these new forms, the virtual team, will enable organizations to become more flexible by providing the impressive productivity of team-based designs in environments where teamwork would have once been impossible.

Virtual teams, which are linked primarily through advanced computer and telecommunications technologies, provide a potent response to the challenges associated with today's downsized and lean organizations, and to the resulting geographical dispersion of essential employees. Virtual teams also address new workforce demographics, where the best employees may be located anywhere the world, and where workers demand increasing technological sophistication and personal flexibility. With virtual teams, organizations can build teams with optimum membership while retaining the advantages of flat organizational structure. Additionally, firms benefit from virtual teams through access to previously unavailable expertise, enhanced cross-functional interaction, and the use of systems that improve the quality of the virtual team's work.

TOPIC 7:

Outcomes of shared leadership: Bright and dark sides (i.e., positive and negative impacts on team processes and performance)

Folgen von Shared Leadership: Helle und dunkle Seiten (d.h., positive und negative Einflüsse auf Teamprozesse und -performance)

Related literature:

Zhu, J, Liao, Z, Yam, KC, Johnson, RE. Shared leadership: A state-of-the-art review and future research agenda. *J Organ Behav.* 2018; 39: 834– 852. <https://doi.org/10.1002/job.2296>

Abstract:

The traditional “great man” approaches to leadership emphasize qualities of individual leaders for leadership success. In contrast, a rapidly growing body of research has started to examine shared leadership, which is broadly defined as an emergent team phenomenon whereby leadership roles and influence are distributed among team members. Despite the progress, however, the extant literature on shared leadership has been fragmented with a variety of conceptualizations and operationalizations. This has resulted in little consensus regarding a suitable overarching theoretical framework and has undermined developing knowledge in this research domain. To redress these problems, we provide a comprehensive review of the growing literature of shared leadership by (a) clarifying the definition of shared leadership; (b) conceptually disentangling shared leadership from other theoretically overlapping constructs; (c) addressing measurement issues; and (d) developing an integrative framework of the antecedents, proximal and distal consequences, and boundary conditions of shared leadership. We end our review by highlighting several new avenues for future research.

TOPIC 8:

Can shared leadership be planned? A critical discussion

Kann Shared Leadership geplant werden? Eine kritische Diskussion

Related literature:

Carson, J. B., Tesluk, P. E., & Marrone, J. A. (2007). Shared Leadership in Teams: An Investigation of Antecedent Conditions and Performance. *Academy of Management Journal*, 50(5), 1217–1234.
<https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2007.20159921>

Abstract:

Shared leadership refers to a team property whereby leadership is distributed among team members rather than focused on a single designated leader. We examined antecedent conditions that lead to the development of shared leadership and the influence of shared leadership on team performance in a sample of 59 consulting teams. Both the internal team environment, consisting of shared purpose, social support, and voice, and external coaching were important predictors of shared leadership emergence. In turn, shared leadership was found to predict team performance as rated by clients. We conclude by discussing the implications of these findings for team leadership and effectiveness.

TOPIC 9:

The impact of leadership rotation in work teams on team member motivation and performance

Der Einfluss von Leadership Rotation in Arbeitsteams auf Motivation und Performance der Teammitglieder

Related literature:

Ballinger, G. A., & Schoorman, F. D. (2007). Individual Reactions to Leadership Succession in Workgroups. *Academy of Management Review*, 32(1), 118–136.
<https://doi.org/10.5465/AMR.2007.23463887>

Abstract:

We integrate theories of cognitive appraisal, relational leadership, and trust to develop a model of how individual affective reactions to leadership succession influence work attitudes and behaviors. We predict that the quality of the relationship with the prior leader will influence an affective reaction to that leader's departure. This affective reaction will influence the group member's initial trust in the new leader, task communication with the new leader, organizational citizenship behaviors, motivation to perform, job satisfaction, and turnover.

TOPIC 10:

Determinants of team creativity in times of digitalization

Determinanten von Team Creativity im Zeitalter der Digitalisierung

Related literature:

Shalley, Christina E., and Lucy L. Gilson. "What leaders need to know: A review of social and contextual factors that can foster or hinder creativity." *The leadership quarterly* 15.1 (2004): 33-53.

Abstract:

This article provides a current review of research examining contextual factors that can either foster or hinder employee creativity at the individual, job, group, and organizational level. Specifically, we examine the role of leadership and the use of different human resource practices for developing a work context that is supportive of creativity. Finally, based on our review, we discuss practical implications for managers, propose areas that need further research attention, and highlight possible new directions for future research.

TOPIC 11:

How to measure team creativity? A critical review of the literature

Wie misst man Teamkreativität? - Eine kritische Überprüfung der Literatur

Related literature:

Dennis Hocevar (1981) Measurement of Creativity: Review and Critique, *Journal of Personality Assessment*, 45:5, 450-464, DOI: 10.1207/s15327752jpa4505_1

Abstract:

Presently available criteria of creativity are reviewed and classified into ten categories: tests of divergent thinking, attitude and interest inventories, personality inventories, biographical inventories, teacher nominations, peer nominations, supervisor ratings, judgments of products, eminence and self-reported creative activities and achievements. These techniques for measuring creativity are then criticized in terms of their reliability, discriminant validity, dimensionality and convergent validity. It is concluded that an inventory of self-reported creative activities and accomplishments is the most defensible technique for selecting creative individuals.

TOPIC 12:

Incentivizing creative tasks in virtual teams

Belohnung kreativer Aufgaben in virtuellen Teams

Related literature:

Deci, E. L. (1971). Effects of externally mediated rewards on intrinsic motivation. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 18(1), 105–115.

Abstract:

Two laboratory experiments and one field experiment were conducted to investigate the effects of external rewards on intrinsic motivation to perform an activity. In each experiment, subjects were

performing an activity during three different periods, and observations relevant to their motivation were made. External rewards were given to the experimental subjects during the second period only, while the control subjects received no rewards. Of interest was the difference in the experimental group's motivation between Period 1 and Period 3, relative to the difference in the control's. The results indicate that (a) when money was used as an external reward, intrinsic motivation tended to decrease, whereas (b) when verbal reinforcement and positive feedback were used, intrinsic motivation tended to increase. Discrepant findings in the literature were reconciled using a new theoretical framework which employs a cognitive approach and concentrates on the nature of the external reward.