"Developing a Unified Stage-Theoretical Framework for Diffusion of Innovation"

Abstract:

Diffusion of Innovations theory plays a large role in helping us understand how innovations and new technology spread throughout a community and are adopted or rejected to become either new institutions or part of yesterday's news. Rogers' Diffusion of Innovations Theory models how innovations spread throughout a community, wherein Rogers' specified 'knowledge' as a key dimension. However, Rogers didn't address specific types of knowledge. Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory of learning allows the researcher to use Learning-About and Learning-By-Doing in order to frame the attention, retention and reproduction necessary for community approval needed for innovation knowledge to spread successfully. Takeuchi and Nonaka's addressing of tacit and explicit knowledge, travelling from socialization through internalization and back, facilitates understanding of how the knowledge can actually modify the individuals' knowledge-seeking and knowledge-contributing in the community. Simon's bounded rationality and satisficing help explain why individuals participate in the community knowledge transfer process at different rates, even while the community as a whole is moving through different types of knowledge transfer. Wang and Ramiller's Community Learning Theory introduces three specific types of knowledge, Know-What, Know-Why and Know-How, which address the knowledge typology not included in Rogers' original work. By adopting complementary definitions from multiple perspectives on diffusion of innovations, we believe we have constructed a more complete and unified stage or phase framework of diffusion of innovation. Hypotheses are developed regarding the stages or phases, and data can be tested in both the community as a whole and the individual participants. This stage or phase framework represents a more comprehensive and unified perspective on the underlying dimensions and aspects of the diffusion of innovations, thus allowing analysis of the entire spectrum of phenomena regarding diffusion.