



## **Innovation activity**

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### **Abstract**

In the current competitive context, innovation has become a necessity, to the point that it seems that no company can survive without developing innovation processes. One of the great concerns of small and medium-sized companies is about the investment of resources in innovation activities and their success. Therefore, this article analyzes the influence of different innovation activities performed by small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) of the Colombian Caribbean region on their product innovation outcomes and thereby provides a solid groundwork for the design of innovation strategies. To achieve this objective, a data collection instrument was first validated in 56 SMEs, followed by the application of a reflective measurement model with convergent validity analysis. The results of the model application revealed that investment in Research and Development (R&D) and innovation, knowledge transfer, technology adoption, and financial aspects explain to a greater extent the introduction of new products to the market.

**Keywords:** An innovation-active firm, Innovation activities, Innovation, Higher education, A marketing innovation, Innovative achievements, Pedagogical technologies, Pedagogy.

Innovation activities are all scientific, technological, organisational, financial and commercial steps which actually, or are intended to, lead to the implementation



of innovations. Some innovation activities are themselves innovative, others are not novel activities but are necessary for the implementation of innovations. Innovation activities also include research and development (R & D) that is not directly related to the development of a specific innovation.

A common feature of an innovation is that it must have been implemented. A new or improved product is implemented when it is introduced on the market. New processes, marketing methods or organisational methods are implemented when they are brought into actual use in the firm's operations.

Innovation activities vary greatly in their nature from firm to firm. Some firms engage in well-defined innovation projects, such as the development and introduction of a new product, whereas others primarily make continuous improvements to their products, processes and operations. Both types of firms can be innovative: an innovation can consist of the implementation of a single significant change, or of a series of smaller incremental changes that together constitute a significant change.

Innovation is the use of new ideas, products or methods where they have not been used before. For the Community Innovation Survey (CIS), an innovation is defined as a new or significantly improved product (good or service) introduced to the market, or the introduction within an enterprise of a new or significantly improved process.

Innovations are based on the results of new technological developments, new technology combinations, or the use of other knowledge, acquired by the enterprise. The innovations may be developed by the innovating enterprise or by another enterprise. However, purely selling innovations wholly produced and developed by other enterprises is not included as an innovation activity, nor is introducing products with purely aesthetic changes.

Innovations should be new to the enterprise concerned: for product innovations, they do not necessarily have to be new to the market and, for process innovations, the enterprise does not necessarily have to be the first one to have introduced the process.



Enterprises carrying out innovation activities cover all types of innovators including product and process innovators, as well as those enterprises with only ongoing and/or abandoned innovation activities. The proportion of enterprises undertaking innovation activities is also called the propensity (tendency) to innovate.

A product innovation is the market introduction of a new or a significantly improved good or service.

A process innovation is the implementation of a new or significantly improved production process, distribution method or support activity for goods or services. Research and experimental development, abbreviated as R&D, comprise the 'creative and systematic work undertaken in order to increase the stock of knowledge - including knowledge of humankind, culture and society - and to devise new applications of available knowledge.

A process innovation is the implementation of a new or significantly improved production or delivery method. This includes significant changes in techniques, equipment and/or software.

Process innovations can be intended to decrease unit costs of production or delivery, to increase quality, or to produce or deliver new or significantly improved products.

Process innovations include new or significantly improved methods for the creation and provision of services. They can involve significant changes in the equipment and software used in services-oriented firms or in the procedures or techniques that are employed to deliver services. Examples are the introduction of GPS tracking devices for transport services, the implementation of a new reservation system in a travel agency, and the development of new techniques for managing projects in a consultancy firm.

Process innovations also cover new or significantly improved techniques, equipment and software in ancillary support activities, such as purchasing, accounting, computing and maintenance. The implementation of new or significantly improved information and communication technology (ICT) is a



process innovation if it is intended to improve the efficiency and/or quality of an ancillary support activity.

A marketing innovation is the implementation of a new marketing method involving significant changes in product design or packaging, product placement, product promotion or pricing.

Marketing innovations are aimed at better addressing customer needs, opening up new markets, or newly positioning a firm's product on the market, with the objective of increasing the firm's sales.

The distinguishing feature of a marketing innovation compared to other changes in a firm's marketing instruments is the implementation of a marketing method not previously used by the firm. It must be part of a new marketing concept or strategy that represents a significant departure from the firm's existing marketing methods. The new marketing method can either be developed by the innovating firm or adopted from other firms or organisations. New marketing methods can be implemented for both new and existing products.

An organisational innovation is the implementation of a new organisational method in the firm's business practices, workplace organisation or external relations.

Organisational innovations can be intended to increase a firm's performance by reducing administrative costs or transaction costs, improving workplace satisfaction (and thus labour productivity), gaining access to nontradable assets (such as non-codified external knowledge) or reducing costs of supplies.

The distinguishing features of an organisational innovation compared to other organisational changes in a firm is the implementation of an organisational method (in business practices, workplace organisation or external relations) that has not been used before in the firm and is the result of strategic decisions taken by management.

An innovation-active firm is one that has had innovation activities during the period under review, including those with ongoing and abandoned activities.



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In other words, firms that have had innovation activities during the period under review, regardless of whether the activity resulted in the implementation of an innovation, are innovation-active.