

Bachelor or master thesis “Agility”

Many companies currently initiate projects aimed at increasing a company’s agility. Agility has been defined in different ways, often similar to adaptiveness, flexibility, and dynamic capabilities. A more discriminant definition has been offered by Singh et al. (2013), who define agility as a two-dimensional concept, entailing (a) the magnitude of variety (i.e., flexibility) (similar to organizational slack) and/or (b) rate of variety generation (i.e., speed) in a firm’s product and service offerings.

The Bachelor or Master Thesis should find and review empirical and conceptual studies that shed light on one, some, or all of the following questions:

- (1) How can one determine how agile an organizational unit or a company is (indicators of agility)?
- (2) By which instruments and means do organizational units or whole companies seek to enhance their agility? In which functional areas? In which combination/s of instruments?
- (3) How effective are the various instruments and/or their combinations under different conditions?
- (4) Given that agility comes at a cost (e.g. slack resources, execution errors due to speed), how does agility affect overall efficiency, and what are relevant contingencies of these effects?

Depending on the number of studies identified, the Bachelor or Master Thesis could concentrate on studies that focus on, or compare, agility in particular functional areas, such as manufacturing and information technology. Alternatively, they could concentrate on particular instruments and means that purportedly enhance agility. Other foci are certainly possible.

The Bachelor or Master Thesis can be written in German or English.

For questions please contact Prof. Dr. Mark Ebers (egers@wiso.uni-koeln.de)

References

Singh, J., Sharma, G., Hill, J., & Schnackenberg, A. K. 2013. Organizational agility: What it is, what it is not, and why it matters. *Proceedings of the Academy of Management Annual Meeting*, 1: 11813-11813.

Some Studies on Agility

Bernardes, E.S., M.D. Hanna. 2009. A theoretical review of flexibility, agility and responsiveness in the operations management literature: Toward a conceptual definition of customer responsiveness. *International Journal of Operations & Production Management* **29**(1) 30-53.

Bottani, E. 2010. Profile and enablers of agile companies: An empirical investigation. *International Journal of Production Economics* **125**(2) 251-261.

Chung, S., K.Y. Lee, K. Kim. 2014. Job performance through mobile enterprise systems: The role of organizational agility, location independence, and task characteristics. *Information & Management* **51**(6) 605-617.

Ganguly, A., R. Nilchiani, J.V. Farr. 2009. Evaluating agility in corporate enterprises. *International Journal of Production Economics* **118**(2) 410-423.

Lu, Y., K. Ramamurthy. 2011. Understanding the link between information technology capability and organizational agility: An Empirical Examination. *MIS Quarterly* **35**(4) 931-954.

- Ngai, E.W.T., D.C.K. Chau, T.L.A. Chan. 2011. Information technology, operational, and management competencies for supply chain agility: Findings from case studies. *The Journal of Strategic Information Systems* **20**(3) 232-249.
- Qin, R., D.A. Nembhard. 2015. Workforce agility in operations management. *Surveys in Operations Research and Management Science* **20**(2) 55-69.
- Recker, J., R. Holten, M. Hummel, C. Rosenkranz. 2017. How agile practices impact customer responsiveness and development success: A field study. *Project Management Journal* **48**(2) 99–121.
- Teece, D., M. Peteraf, S. Leih. 2016. Dynamic capabilities and organizational agility. *California Management Review* **58**(4) 13-35.
- Tseng, Y.-H., C.-T. Lin. 2011. Enhancing enterprise agility by deploying agile drivers, capabilities and providers. *Information Sciences* **181**(17) 3693-3708.
- Winby, S., C.G. Worley. 2014. Management processes for agility, speed, and innovation. *Organizational Dynamics* **43**(3) 225-234.
- Worley, C.G., E.E. Lawler III. 2010. Agility and organization design:: A diagnostic framework. *Organizational Dynamics* **39**(2) 194-204.