ABSTRACT

Program innovations are third order process innovations - synergistic combinations of administrative and technical innovations. Generic Program Innovations (GPIs) have an existence across several across organizations unlike Specific Program Innovations (SPIs) which are unique to a given organization. For over a decade now, GPIs have been the ascendan form of innovations. Yet their adoption has not received adequate attention in academic literature. This thesis examines the organizational adoption of GPIs. The focus is on the adoption decision.

Drawing from the literature on Organization Theory in general and Innovation Theory in particular, a set of hypotheses are developed. These hypotheses relate contextual, organizational and top management team variables to the adoption of GPIs. These hypotheses are tested using ISO 9000 quality assurance systems and TQM (Total Quality Management) as examples of GPIs. Firstly the adoption of ISO 9000 in a sample of 148 manufacturing organizations is examined using All India secondary data. Secondly the adoption of ISO 9000 and TQM in a sample of 62 manufacturing organizations is examined using primary data collected from Bangalore Urban district.

A majority of the hypotheses are supported by the findings of these two studies. The findings provide evidence in favour of two different perspectives on innovation adoption viz. the efficient-choice perspective and the institutional perspective. The two perspectives are integrated using the concept of "political efficiency of an innovation". The adoption of politically efficient innovations is better explained by the institutional perspective.

The findings of this thesis suggest a few implications for management and policy, particularly with regard to harnessing inter-organizational networks to facilitate innovation adoption.

The thesis concludes with an agenda for further research. It includes an indicative section on the scope for integration of theory across domains in broad discipline of management.