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HOW TO MANAGE THE OBSTACLES RELATED TO MANAGEMENT INNOVATION IMPLEMENTATION: LESSON FROM A COMPLEX INDUSTRIAL COMPANY

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Abstract

Recent literature on management innovation suggests that the implementation phase is a critical step in the entire process of management innovation. This phase is critical because of his many possible obstacles. The present study focuses on the obstacles and provides insight how to overcome them. We conducted an in-depth explorative case study of a major management innovation implemented (to a “top down model diffusion”) in all business units of a multinational industrial company. First, we identified, different categories of obstacles. Then, we described how the company faces these obstacles using organizational and managerial adaptations. Finally, we suggest two principles of management innovation implementation and best managerial practices in order to successfully implement management innovation. Our findings suggest for a management innovation implementation to be successful using a “top down model” requires manager involvement through a systemic approach which linked all the hierarchical levels and specific objectives.

Key words: Industrial Company, Implementation, Management innovation

INTRODUCTION

A substantial body of literature shows that management innovation provides a competitive advantage to companies (Mol and Birkinshaw, 2009; Battisti and Stoneman, 2010; Camison and Villar-Lopez, 2012; Volberda *et al.*, 2013; Lavastre *et al.*, 2014). Some authors even argue that the competitive advantage resulting from management innovation is more enduring than a competitive advantage which can be obtained by product or process innovation (Hamel, 2006; Hamel and Breen, 2008).

Nevertheless the implementation of management innovation is both under-researched and not without its problems (Birkinshaw *et al.*, 2008; Mamman, 2009, Ansari *et al.*, 2010, 2014). Previous studies have identified various obstacles in implementing a management innovation. Innovation scholars indicate that because of the unavoidable internal obstacles related to the implementation of new management practices, a management innovation may be rejected by the organization (Knights and McCabe, 1978; Lozeau *et al.*, 2002). Given the gap between the practices and the rhetoric related to the management innovation, other authors argue that this is why only part of the innovation is adopted (Zbaracky, 1998, Hill and Wilkinson, 1995). Finally, management innovation scholars admitted that, when new management practices are introduced within a company, there is an interaction between the nature of the management innovation and the company environment, the result being that both elements interact (Segrestin, 2004; O' Mahoney, 2007; Damanpour and Aravind, 2012; Ansari *et al.*, 2010, 2014). To some up, the literature suggests that the management of the obstacles generated by the introduction of a management innovation is a critical factor in gaining competitive advantage (Torbjorn and Ake, 1993; Mamman, 2009; Ansari *et al.*, 2010, 2014).

While scholars have examined the implementation of a management innovation which had been created “from the outside” (Lillrank, 1995; Dubouloz, 2014; Peeters *et al.*, 2014) there has been less research about the implementation of a management innovation created internally (David, 2013; Ansari *et al.*, 2010, 2014). In the present paper we address the following: how to manage the obstacles related to a management innovation created internally and how to implement it according to “top-down” model.

To address this question, we focus on the implementation of a management innovation which aims to deeply and completely transform the management style of an international company operating in an industrial sector.

We contribute in three ways. Firstly, we identify the main obstacles which appear during the implementation process of a management innovation. Secondly, we analyze how the organization faces them by initiating corrective actions which change its organization, and its management style. Finally, by studying these corrective actions, we will identify two principles for successfully management innovation implementation and we suggest best practices. We conclude with some theoretical and managerial implications of our work.

1. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

When literature focuses on how companies adopt a management innovation, the specific phase of implementation is seen more as a blurred process than as a process in its own right. Management innovation implementation is usually driven through a dialectical process (Klein and Sorra, 1996; Birkinshaw et al., 2008). We can refer to different frameworks in literature related to the process of management innovation implementation. More precisely, it is possible to identify two main models: the “recursive interlinked model” and the “top down model” (Daft, 1978; Birkinshaw *et al.*, 2008).

Furthermore, literature allows us to identify traditional obstacles that disturb the implementation process of innovative management practices (Brockman and Morgan, 1999; Ayerbe and Fonrouge, 2005). Some authors demonstrate that absorptive capacity routines, and their underlying process of evolution, influence the efficiency of a management innovation implementation process (Dubouloz and Bocquet, 2013; Peeters *et al.*, 2014).

Some recent studies highlight the point as to how management innovation practices vary as they diffuse and how to manage the tension between maintaining the innovative management practice’s integrity while allowing for variation (Ansari *et al.*, 2010, 2014).

1.1. IMPLEMENTATION OF MANAGEMENT INNOVATION, DEFINITION AND MODELS

Usually scholars conceptualize the implementation of a management innovation as a multiphase and a multidimensional process (Aiken and Hage, 1971; Klein and Sorra, 1996; Damanpour and Schneider, 2006; Birkinshaw *et al.*, 2008). Certain authors speak to four phases in the whole process of management innovation implementation from its emergence until it becomes completely absorbed and utilized by an organization. According to Aiken and Hage, (1971) the four phases are: evaluation, initiation, implementation and routinization. Klein and Sorra, (1996) define it differently as: awareness, selection, adoption, implementation and routinization. Damanpour and Schneider (2006) distinguishes three different phases: initiation, adoption decision and implementation, where implementation is

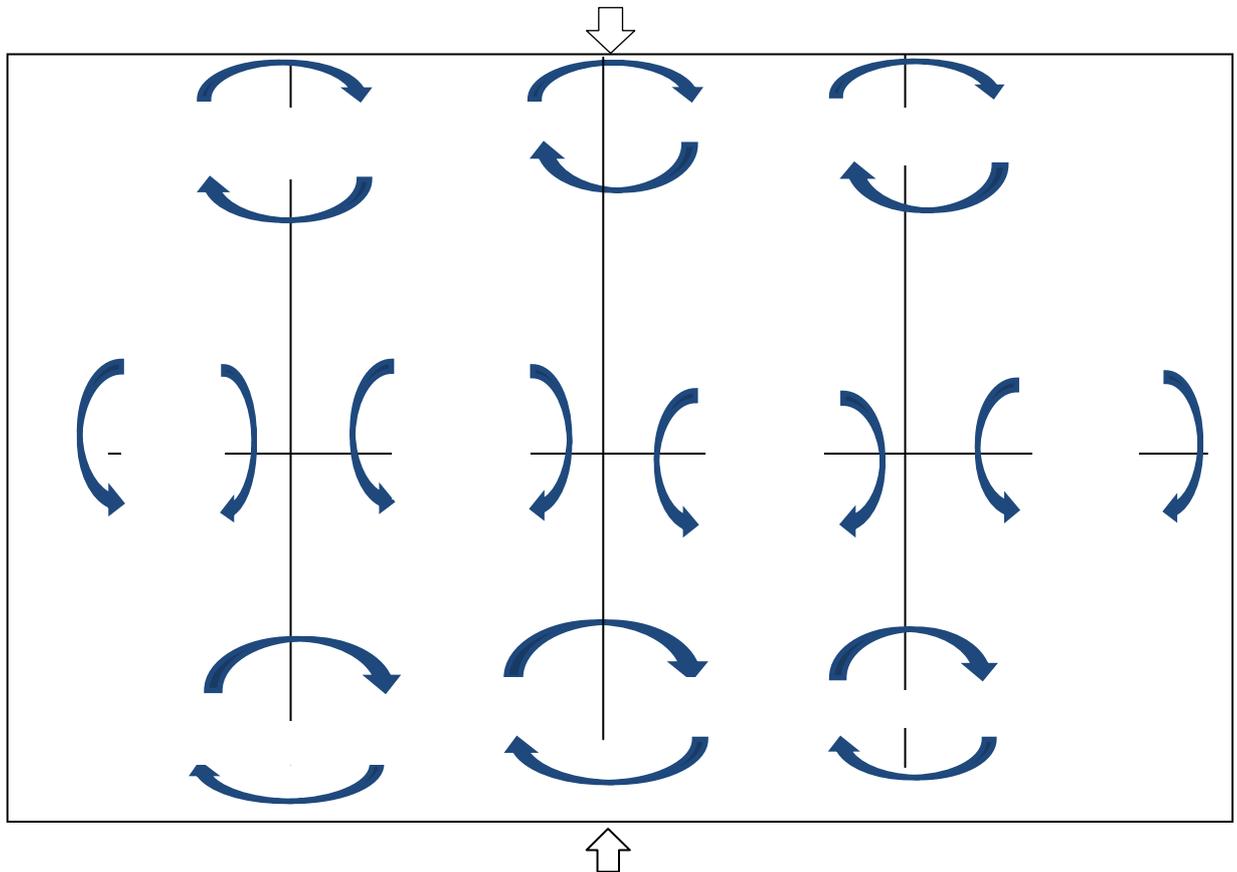
defined as: “*Events and actions that pertain to modifying the innovation, preparing the organization for its use, trial use, acceptance of the innovation until it becomes a routine feature of the organization*” (Damanpour and Schneider, 2006, p. 217). Focusing on management innovation, Birkinshaw *et al.*, (2008) distinguished four interlinked phases in the innovation process through which this kind of innovation comes about. These phases are: motivation, invention, implementation, theorization and labelling (Figure N°1). They define the specific phase of implementation as: “*All the activity on the technical side of the innovation after the initial experiment, up to the point where the new management innovation is first fully operational*” (Birkinshaw *et al.*, 2008, p. 836). Later, other authors define implementation as: “*The process by which an adopter strives to create a better fit between an external practice and the adopter’s particular needs to increase its zone of acceptance during implementation*” (Ansari *et al.*, 2010, p. 71).

1.1.1. Implementation of management innovation according to the “recursive interlinked model”

According to the “recursive interlinked model” (Birkinshaw *et al.*, 2008), the specific implementation phase of a management innovation corresponding with “idea testing” is divided into “in-vivo new practice” and “in vitro thought experiment”. Here we consider mainly the “in-vivo new practice” and the role of internal change agents because as Birkinshaw *et al* state: “*External change agent [...] rarely play an active role in actually implementing new ideas in vivo*” (Birkinshaw *et al*, 2008, p. 837). The “in vivo new practice” phase is related to two sub processes: “trial and error” and “reflecting experimenting”. The first phase to engage by internal change agents is monitoring and making adjustments to the original concept of management innovation, with the aim of improving it after its first usage (trial and error). The second phase is evaluating the consequences of management innovation implementation in a way to know how to answer the tensions created by these changes (reflective experimenting) (Figure N°1). This means that the concrete management innovation implementation transpires through a series of interactions between the will of top management to promote new practices of management and the reality of the practices adopted by collaborators (Zbaracki, 1998, Hills and Wilkinson, 1995).

Figure N° 1. The “recursive interlinked model”

(Birkinshaw *et al.*, 2008 p. 832)

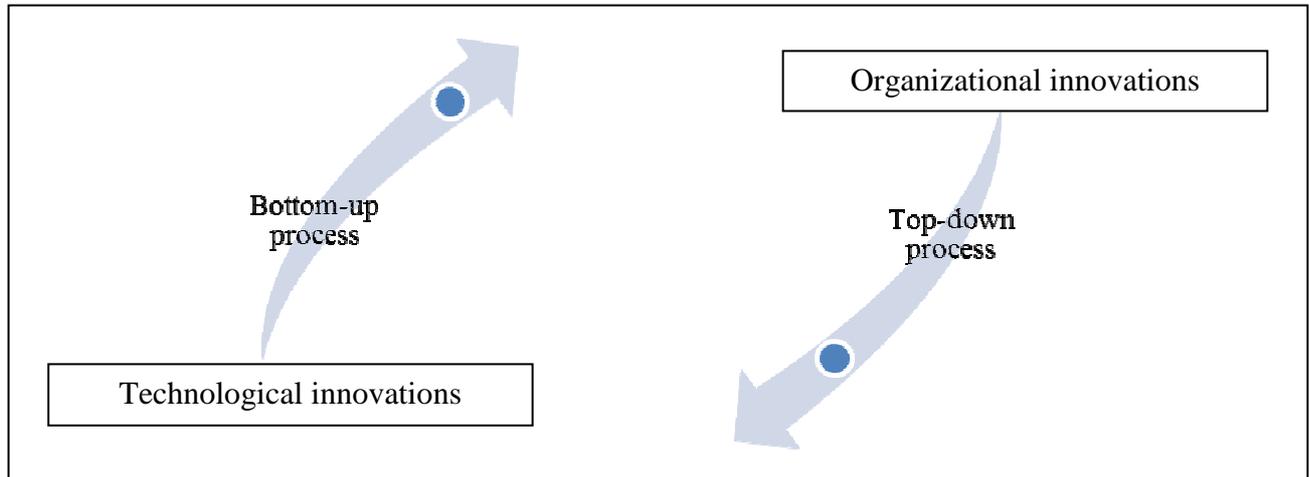


1.1.2. Implementation of management innovation according to “top-down model”

In 1978, Daft describes the process of innovation suggesting that the diffusion of an innovation could be divided into four essential steps: conception, proposition, adoption, and finally, implementation. He concentrates his study on the first two phases and does not cover the specific process of adoption and implementation, but he suggests a “dual core model” of diffusion which is always useful today. According to this “dual core model”, technological innovations are implemented in a company according to a “bottom-up” process, although management innovation requires a “top-down model” to be implemented (Figure N° 2).

Figure N° 2. The dual-core model of diffusion of organizational innovation

(Daft, 1978)



1.2. THE MAIN OBSTACLES OF MANAGEMENT INNOVATION IMPLEMENTATION

There is a consensus in literature on the fact that the specific phase of implementation of management innovation constantly requires the modification or adaptation of the core model of the management innovation (Klein and Sorra, 1996; Ansari *et al.*, 2010, 2014). As Akrich *et al.* state about implementing innovation: “*To adopt is to adapt*” (Akrich *et al.*, 2002, p. 208). However, employee attitude toward change in the way of management is generally negative and sometimes leads to the rejection or the lessening of management innovation (Knights and McCabe, 2001). So, companies have to carefully manage the implementation phase with a determinate strategy (Ansari *et al.*, 2010, 2014). Authors suggest that companies have to manage the implementation process and strive to strike a balance between extensive and high fidelity implementation and local adaptation to accommodate context idiosyncrasies (Ansari *et al.*, 2014).

Resistance to change can take different forms depending on the nature of the innovation and the environment in which it is implemented. Literature allows us to identify traditional obstacles that disturb the implementation process of innovative management practices.

Some are attached to the learning process (Argyris, 2003; Ansari *et al.*, 2010, 2014), others to the relationship between the culture of the company and the nature of the innovation (Klein and Sorra, 1996; Brockman and Morgan, 1999; Ayerbe and Fonrouge, 2005). Other authors focus on the commitment of the managers (Torbjörn and Ake, 1993, Birkinshaw *et al.*, 2008).

Another obstacle is related to the issue of the legitimization of the management innovation (Peeters *et al.*, 2014). Finally, other studies focused on the difficulty a company faces in maintaining the changes introduced by the management innovation over time (Dubouloz, 2014). All these obstacles can endanger the entire implementation process.

Moreover, when “top-down” model is the diffusion mechanism, Lozeau *et al* (2002) demonstrates that in an international context, many business units may be reluctant to accept and adopt a management innovation.

So, what happens when a company decides to implement a management innovation throughout all its business units according to “top-down” process, without accepting local accommodations or reconfiguration of the core principle of the management innovation? This is precisely the point we will discuss.

More specifically, we focus on how the company succeeds in managing the obstacles allowing a successful adoption of a management innovation which dramatically changes the manager’s tasks and the whole company way of management.

2. THEORETICAL GAP

We know that new management practices implementation, generate obstacle and resistance within an intra-organizational context, requiring redefinition and customization of the management innovation (Damanpour and Schneider, 2006; Birkinshaw *et al.*, 2008; Ansari *et al.*, 2010, 2014). The process of management innovation implementation necessitates careful consideration, to manage the tensions and the obstacles due to management innovation introduction. (Damanpour and Schneider, 2006; Ansari *et al.*, 2010, 2014). Usually, literature states that malleability and customization enhance and favor the adoption of management innovation (Ansari *et al.*, 2010, 2014; Peeters *et al.*, 2014). As far as we know, no prior studies suggest the main obstacles and how to remove these obstacles in order to implement a management innovation utilizing a “top down” model which doesn’t allow local accommodations. That is precisely the gap we want to fill. How to manage the obstacles related to the management innovation implementation process in a case of enactment of “top-down model”.

The present study provides “a success story” that aims to illustrate the obstacles and the solutions to remove it for implementing successfully a major management innovation. The statements below are from senior managers of the company and illustrate the fully management innovation implementation within the company.

"Management SIM method is spread throughout the group, you can move from one department to another, from one function to another and you will be not lost. It is important because in a large group you move a lot and therefore this common culture broadcasts a common operating mode" (Interview N° 5).

3. METHODOLOGY

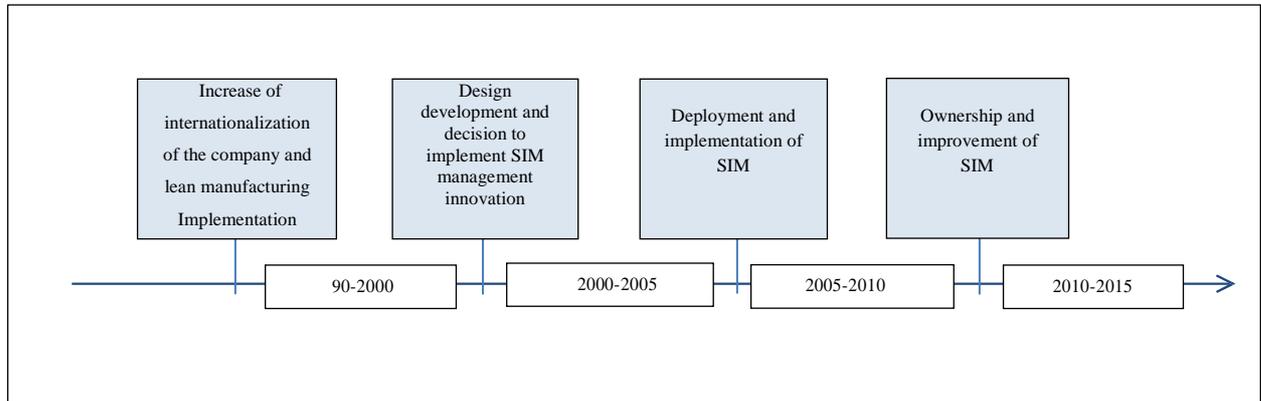
The case research method is well-suited to reports an in-depth study focusing on the process of implementation of a major management innovation. Because the company has no authorized disclosure of its identity we call it firm SEC. The case study provides an opportunity to investigate in a real-life setting the organizational factors that can, not only inhibit the implementation of the managerial innovation, but also how the company succeeds to overcome these negative effects and finally succeeded to implement the management innovation throughout the organization. The main reason which motivated us to adopt a case research is because it's useful for understanding the specific mechanisms which modify an organization (Pettigrew, 1990; Yin, 2009). Moreover, we refer specifically to the procession strategy research describe by Musca which is useful for a better understanding of complex longitudinal case including several sub-units involved in a large organizational change (Musca, 2006).

3.1. SELECTION AND PRESENTATION OF THE CASE STUDY

Company SEC is a private French company, formed by the fusion of three main companies working for a long period in the same activity sector, each well known in their respective trades. At the turn of the 20th century, the company decided to fuse all its trades into one trade mark name in order to enforce its reputation and visibility. When we conducted the interviews, the company employed more than 140,000 employees at approximately 150 locations in more than 100 countries. The company operates in an intensely competitive environment where it is crucial to improve its productivity to maintain its markets and the financial performance. Manufacturing business units are in competition with each other to reach the productivity objectives defined by the company and to increase efficiency. The implementation of an internal and unique method of management called Short Interval Management (SIM), is seen by the top management as the best means to reach the productivity objective defined by the company. That is why business units cannot change the core model of the management innovation but they have to apply this new way of management in their environments. This new way to organizing the hierarchical relationship

and the management of the company was implemented throughout all business units for 5 years (figure N° 3).

Figure N° 3. SIM implementation in Schneider Electric in recent period



We also chose this particular company because we could be involved on a management level during the implementation process (2005- 2012). The richness of data we could collect allowed us to analyze the direct and indirect effects generated by the introduction of management innovation and understand how the company succeeded in solving the inherent resistances to change. In this way, we contribute to increasing our knowledge about how management innovation could be successfully implemented in a company according to Mol and Birkinshaw's recommendations: "*Future research should focus on poorly understood facets of management innovation, namely the processes of creation and implementation*" (Mol and Birkinshaw, 2009, p. 1278).

3.2. DATA COLLECTION

We conducted 30 semi-directive interviews in five different business units at multiple hierarchical levels, getting abundance verbatim comments from the senior up to front line managers (Team-leaders). Each interview lasted at least one hour and sometimes all day. All the interviews were made *in situ* and during the period from 2010 to 2013. Certain key respondents were interviewed several times. In addition to registration and transcription of all the interviews, we physically assisted in the implementation of the SIM method in one business unit. This allows for cross-checking and verifying the accuracy of the data collected and also providing diversity of perspectives (Eisenhardt and Graebner, 2007). At the beginning of each interview, informants were told that the purpose of the enquiry was to understand the main effects of SIM management innovation implementation on their way of managing and organizing their hierarchical relationship. We transcribed each interview and

asked respondents to validate the verbatim. To do this we asked respondents to talk freely about the SIM management innovation and the direct or indirect effects in managing their daily tasks. The interviews were comprised of semi-structured questions addressing four main themes: the direct, indirect and meta effects of the introduction of SIM method on the way to manage, the main organizational obstacles related to the management innovation implementation, the response of the company to overcome these obstacles, and finally the key success factors according to their representation. Construct validity is supported by literature and also key company informants, in particular top managers in charge of the diffusion of the management innovation. This method is pertinent to investigate the direct and indirect interactions upon the organization (Musca, 2006; Yin, 2009). For exploiting the verbatim we used two principle stages of data analysis. We imported all the verbatim into a computerized system (Nvivo), coding this data according to distinct units of meaning (Dumez, 2013). However because a computerized system is too heavy to manage a large volume of data we identified pattern codes which were used to find causal relationships. To do this, we used matrices to identify the direct, indirect and “meta-effect” generating obstacles in the SIM implementation processes according to a specific segmentation of the respondents (Miles and Huberman, 2003). Then we focused on these obstacles and we analyze how the company succeeded to solve these issues.

To improve the validity of our results, we adopt the triangulation method described by Miles and Huberman (1984). We used not only semi structured interviews with actors as part of our field study, but also immersion observations and analysis of internal documents and publication. All this data guarantees a multidimensional view and a wide range of research materials: « *In fact, the various sources are highly complementary, and a good case study requires the use of the number of possible sources*” (Yin, 2009, p. 101). Specific respondents are referred to with a number as to ensure their anonymity. The case study allowed us to observe, by immersion, the diffusion and the appropriation of the management innovation in five business units with agreement from the top management of the company.

Figure N° 4. Characteristics of respondents and their function

	Number of respondents	Function of respondent	Function of respondent	Function of respondent	Function of respondent
Top executives	4	Vice president quality and industrial performance	Corporate chief responsible for industrial performance in charge of SIM deployment in the group	Director for manufacturing, France	Human resources department manager
Business Unit "A"	4	"Low voltage" manufacturing supervisor	Technical productivity supervisor	Supply chain excellence and industrial performance supervisor	Business unit Human Resources supervisor
Business Unit "B"	4	Regional Director of industrial automation	Business coordination manager	Business manager	Senior account manager for industrial automation
Business Unit "C"	4	Plant manager	Team manufacturing supervisor	Industrial performance manager	SIM diffusion supervisor
Business Unit "D"	4	Industrial performance manager	Business unit Human Resources supervisor	Team leader	Team leader
Business Unit "E"	10	Plant manager	Business unit Human Resources supervisor	Team manufacturing supervisor (TMS)	Industrial performance manager
		Technical productivity supervisor	Supply chain supervisor	Technical team Coordinator	Maintenance supervisor

		Team manufacturing supervisor (TMS)	Head of production service		
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4. RESULTS: MAIN OBSTACLES RELATED TO THE SIM MANAGEMENT INNOVATION IMPLEMENTATION

4.1. TABLE OF THE MAIN OBSTACLES RELATING TO THE MANAGEMENT INNOVATION IMPLEMENTATION

The obstacles related to the SIM management innovation implementation can be broken down into three broad categories. We have chosen to present our results by developing them in two samples of respondents. The first sample of respondents therefore, includes senior managers (executives and engineers). The second sample represents the middle and front line management, including collaborators such as Responsible of Team Manufacturing (RTM), technical officers and "team-leaders". To develop the table below, we counted each instance when someone declared obstacles in one of the categories mentioned. If someone made reference to the "commitment of the managers" several times during their interview we counted these as a single occurrence. On the other hand, if in a same interview a respondent indicated two different types of obstacles, we counted two different occurrences.

As expected, we have found different obstacle categories in our verbatim.

Figure N° 5. The main obstacles related to SIM implementation

Nature of the obstacles		Middle and front line managers	Senior managers	TOTAL
Obstacles related to direct effects of SIM implementation	Obstacles related to the learning processes: (Animation loops, prioritization of actions, compliance plans contact, non-compliance of indicators)	12	10	22
Obstacles-related to "meta-effects" of	Obstacles related the lack communication between different SIM's loops	8	3	11

SIM implementation	Obstacles related to the lack of commitment of managers	5	5	10
Obstacles related to indirect effects of SIM implementation	Obstacles related to culture change (resistance of the actors to change). Brake related to saturation of support functions	0	5	5

10)

Figure N° 6. Table of solutions for removing obstacles

Best practices for success	Middle and Front line management	Senior managers	TOTAL
SIM allows defined performance objectives to be reached	2	6	8
SIM fosters a more impartial individual and collective appreciation by using well known indicators	9	9	18
SIM allows change of the decision-making circuit to generate greater speed and higher relevance	4	8	12
SIM increases the margin of autonomy of the first hierarchical levels and promotes the functions enrichment	7	6	13
SIM generates solidarity around common objectives between all hierarchical levels	7	7	14

5. DISCUSSION, THEORETICAL AND MANAGERIAL CONTRIBUTIONS

5.1. DISCUSSION

Our first result:

R1: Actors consider that management innovation SIM allows productivity objectives to be reached as defines by the company legitimizing the rhetoric about management innovation (8 items)

A significant number of respondents argue that SIM management innovation allows to reach the productivity's objectives defines by the company. Successful implementation at the intra organizational level of SIM management innovation is supported by the feeling of the actors that this method allows the performance productivity level as defined by the company. SIM management innovation implementation has coincided with the implementation of measurement indicators to demonstrate the favorable evolution of specific processes. For example SIM indicators demonstrate a reduction in the processing time when manufacturing a specific product and consequently enhance of productivity. Another result credited to SIM indicators is the ability to put new equipment in use with less time required for experimentation. This first result is in accordance with Mol and Birkinshaw (2009) as well as Damanpour (2014) and Volberda *et al* (2013) who argue that management innovation improve performance. However, our results are positioned at an intra-organizational level. The testimony of a variety of managers allows us to exclude the bias of cross-effects.

"The bigger engine is the demonstration of the efficiency of the method; it's been 10 years since we changed gear in terms of performance and continuous improvement. Efficiency is our best ally" (Interview No. 4).

"It is not the technology that counts the most, because everybody has more or less the same. Implementing technological innovation without the Short Management Interval Method, only allows the recovery of 10% of the potential productivity of the technological innovation. While combining the two yields far better results, it is the synchronization of both which is important "(Interview N°7).

Second result:

R2: Management innovation fosters a more impartial individual and collective appreciation by using well-known indicators (18 items).

Transparent and relevant indicators continuously display the evolution of the production team's performance. Furthermore, the industrial performance measurement system is sufficiently sophisticated to take into account certain malfunctions which are not caused by individuals. Thus, the gap between the time standard to produce a deliverable is different from

the allotted time, which takes into account the unpredictable external events, such as machinery failure.

Third result:

R3: Management innovation allows change of the decision-making circuit to generate greater speed and higher relevance (12 items).

We have seen that the SIM approach is based on different management sequences starting with the plan first level manager up to the plant manager. This systemic device guarantees not only taking into account the varying dysfunctions that may occur during each production shift, as well as the treatment of these dysfunctions by the action plans. This leads to two effects particularly important:

- (i) The voice of operators and the first levels of management are taken into account and lead to concrete improvement actions.
- (ii) Adjustments regarding the requirement expressed in the action plans do not remain unanswered. They can be resolved at the level of loops 1 or 2, at the middle management level or the do through loops 4 or 5 until the plant manager is able to process them. *Therefore, it is fundamental that the top-down decision circuit is as quick as possible because an inordinately slow process in decision-making leads inevitably to demobilization of lower level of management. In this case operators and team-leaders will stop suggesting new action plans and subsequently could endanger the entire device.*

Result four:

R4: Management innovation increases the margin of autonomy of the first hierarchical levels of management and promotes the enrichment functions of this level of management (13 items).

We found that the first levels of management adopt well to SIM method because they find more autonomy and enrichment of their tasks, or diversity in their day to day work.

"The SIM approach as is often the case for managerial innovations induces reduction of hierarchical levels, and a reduction of staff in terms of organization by job enrichment, growth in versatility and skills, as well as productivity gains" (interview N° 2

Fifth result:

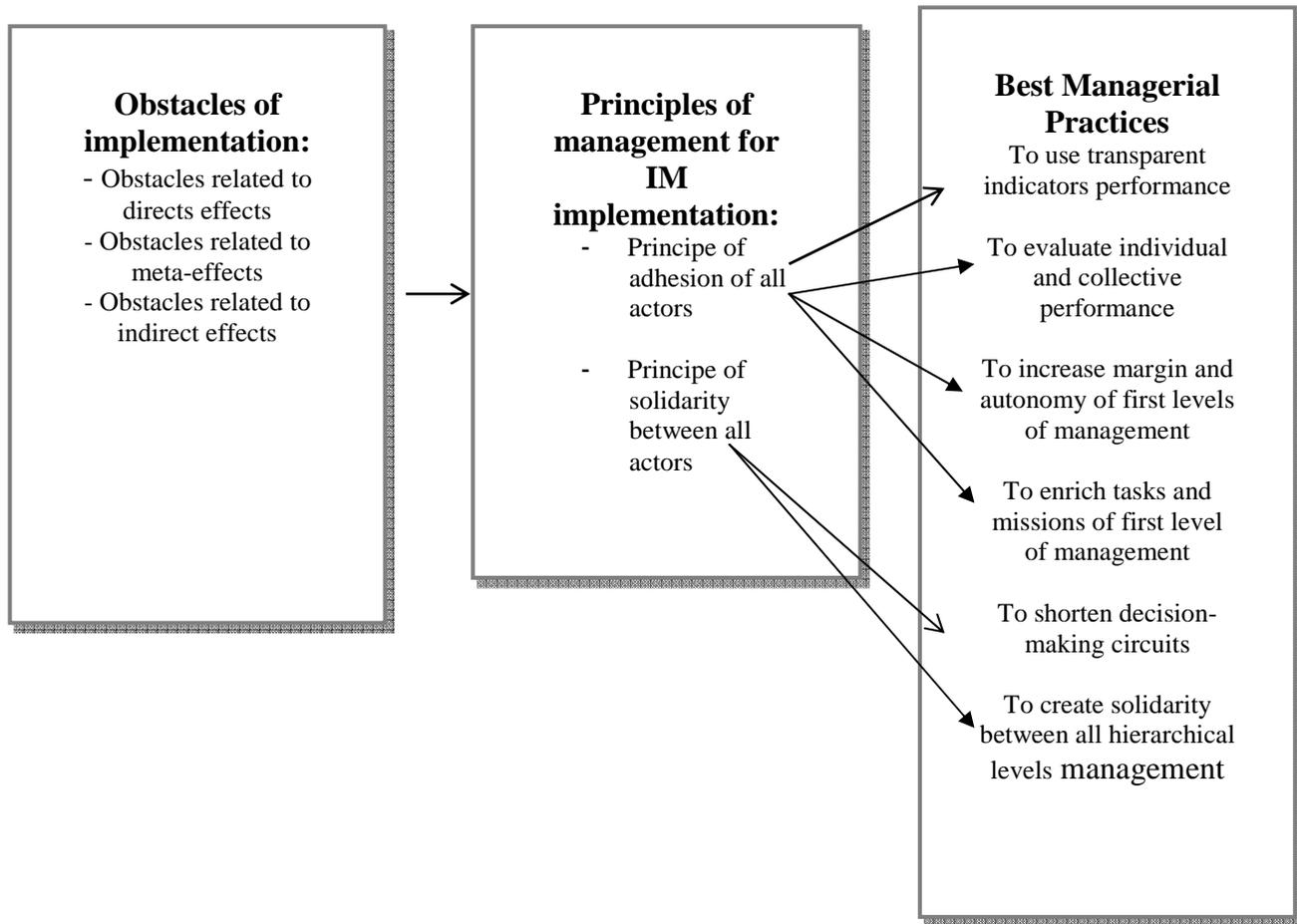
R5: Management innovation generates solidarity around common objectives between all hierarchical levels (14 items)

Through the system of successive loops, all the actors of the company are involved in solving action plans. No manager can operate outside this system of action plans related to the different loops. A lot of discrepancies between the expected results and the observed outcomes originate from unresolved or poorly managed action plans. Because upper hierarchical levels are also involved in the loops system it makes it visible. These higher hierarchical levels must also contribute to solve these action plans by attributing necessary resources in time or in asset. Thus, the SIM management innovation is successfully implemented in our opinion due to this solidarity around common objectives and through realization of action plans between all hierarchical levels linked in the loops system.

"SIM is a powerful method to ensure progress at the same pace and controlled tasks and projects" (Interview N° 5).

5.2 THEORETICAL CONTRIBUTIONS

Figure N° 11. A proposal framework for successful MI implementation



5.3. MANAGERIAL CONTRIBUTIONS

The study offers important managerial implications for successfully management implementation innovation in companies. Firstly, we saw that the process of implementation and ownership of the managerial innovation is much better accepted that it demonstrated its effectiveness with regard to the objective announced. The first recommendation management that we can thus formulate is the need to build a theoretical corpus and internal practices relating to the nature of innovation management techniques and methods of implementation which is the most comprehensive possible. This document must contain a theoretical part which seeks to legitimize the implementation of innovation. This development and design phase may originate from the 'corporate' level of the company as part of a 'top-down' approach because the managerial innovation must be in line with the general strategy of the company and his general mode of organization. The corporate level is also the branch that has the

competence to define the human and material resources implemented, as well as the modalities and timing of deployment.

Then the company has to dedicated specific teams in charge of the diffusion of the management innovation in the different business unit and to rely on the traditional line management to these teams.

Another recommendation is that management innovation must involve all the hierarchical levels to settle effectively and successfully in the business. The management innovation AIC by its systematic appearance, obliges the organized collaboration between all the actors of the hierarchical line, and does not allow managers to fall outside the system. They are necessarily involved in one of the loops of the SIM and any passivity on their part will appear immediately through a delay in the resolution of the action plans. The management innovation is based on the exemplary and organized involvement of each manager. This organization could be a good answer to the main problem of investment of the manager in the diffusion and appropriation of the management innovation. On the other hand, it's not possible to imagine a deep and radical change in management if the required examples do not come from the highest managers (Zbaracky, 1998).

This is why we give advice to a company wishing to implement a managerial innovation to be radical, and it involves all levels. the fact that real solidarity is organized between various managers through common practices and generalized methods we believe help the success of the process of implementation of innovation management. and finally the perseverance is a fundamental criterion.

6. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURES RESEARCH

Successful management innovation implementation is a complex construct, and capturing all its multidimensional aspects seems rather impossible. Our study therefore has several limitations. The boundary of our research in the first place is the specific approach of the case study. The use of unique survey ground, limits the generalization of the results obtained and the external validity of the research (Miles, 1979). However, we believe this argument have been weakened by the fact that our case study contains several sites which can be regarded to some extent as distinct entities although belonging to the same group. Another limitation is the fact that our analysis is part of a time "t" in the life of the company. As Wacheux wrote: *"A case analysis is an analysis of a spatial and temporal complex phenomenon by the conditions, events, actors and the implications"* (Wacheux, 1996, p. 89). One could also

object because our results are derived from a specific environment related to industry and manufacturing. What would be the result of SIM management innovation in a non-industrial sector? This is the next challenge that assigns herself the company with the aim of implement the SIM in its non-manufacturing units and departments. It would be relevant and interesting to analyze how this innovation could be declined in a service environment or in a commercial service. This is in our view a topic for future works of great interest.

CONCLUSION

This explorative research contributes to a better understanding of the obstacles and the key factors success of implementation of management innovation. In order to, we focus on the implementation of a management innovation in an international company operating in industrial sector. We propose a framework for a successful implementation in top-down model. This framework should be tested by researchers in future works.

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