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Intellectual property rights in innovation management research:

a review



Authors: CANDELIN-PALMQVIST, H. / SANDBERG, B. / MYLLY, U-M.

Author of the summary: Fernanda Passoni

SUMMARY			
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Author	Fernanda Passoni	Date	09.08.2019

Abstract

The article aims to analyse the current research on Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) in the field of innovation management and spot the ongoing trends in this field. The analysis concerns, both in content and method, IPR-related articles published in 1970 – 2009 in the leading journals concerning innovation management.

Keywords

Intellectual Property Rights, Innovation management; Review; Patent;

Summary

The authors analysed articles published in 1970-2009 in journals selected¹ based on the Linton's 2007 ranking, which defined the impact factors of then highly ranked journals, focusing on technology and innovation management.²

The articles were selected based on the following search words: appropriability; copyright; counterfeiting/counterfeit; geographic indication; industrial design; intellectual property; intellectual property right; patent; pirating/pirate; trademark; IP; IPR.³ In total, the analysis consisted 111 articles focusing on IPR issues.⁴ Articles without specific academic merit⁵ were excluded from further analysis.⁶

¹ IEEE Transactions on Engineering Management; Journal of Engineering and Technology Management; Journal of Product Innovation Management; R&D Management Journal; Research Policy; Technological Forecasting and Social change; *Technovation*.

² H. Candelin-Palmqvist, B. Sandberg, U.-M Mylly, Intellectual property rights in innovation management research: a review [2012]. Pg 503.

³ Ibid, 504.

⁴ Ibid, 504.

⁵ Such as book reviews and editorials.

⁶ H. Candelin-Palmqvist, B. Sandberg, U.-M Mylly, Intellectual property rights in innovation management research: a review [2012]. Pg 504.

The next step taken by the authors was categorizing the articles in terms of macro- and micro-level studies.⁷ Macro-level studies containing a general perspective of an industry or a country represented almost 90% of the selected articles. Articles with a smaller scale perspective (like a company) were categorized as micro-level.⁸

The data was analysed by two researchers: one researcher focused on IPR from a business perspective. The other researcher focused on innovation-management.⁹ To assist with the conclusions and the verification of the research, a third researcher with a legal background was selected.¹⁰

The analysis displayed that over 70% of all articles focusing on IPR were published in the last decade, meaning that the research focused on IPR in innovation management was still in the emergent state during the 1970's.¹¹ The authors observed that the first article focusing clearly on IPR was published in 1979 in the *R&D Management Journal*.¹² From 1999-2009, 80 (2% of all) IPR-focused articles were published in the surveyed journals, 2008 being the year with the highest number of published articles (4% of all).

Regarding the geographic localisation, it was observed that IPR research is becoming more international. The number of contributing authors from outside North America and Europe increased from 14% in the period of 1970-1999, to 43% in 2000-2009. During the last two decades, the number of studies on Germany and the UK remained almost constant, while in Japan, China and the USA the number is rising.¹³ It is possible that the increase in China was due to its acceptance as a member of the World Trade Organization in 2001 and its subsequent implementation of the TRIPS Agreement.¹⁴ One of the reasons of the increasing number of articles in the USA could come from the size and significance of the US market by global standards.¹⁵

The authors concluded that, in terms of content, articles heavily emphasised on North America and Asian countries.¹⁶ However, most authors were affiliated with European universities and the European context.

With respect to the industry sector, 69 of the articles did not refer to a specific sector. The remaining 42 articles were separated between high technology manufacturing (67%), manufacturing (24%) and services (9%).

Among all IPRs examined by the authors, patents were accentuated the most and approached in different forms depending on the researched journals. In *IEEE Transactions on Engineering Management*, *R&D Management Journal* and *Research*

⁷ Ibid, 504.

⁸ Ibid, 504.

⁹ Ibid, 504.

¹⁰ Ibid, 504.

¹¹ Ibid, 504.

¹² Ibid, 504.

¹³ Ibid, 505.

¹⁴ Ibid, 506.

¹⁵ Ibid, 505.

¹⁶ Ibid, 506.

Policy, the role of patents as an indicator of innovativeness and firm performance was prevalent.¹⁷ *Technovation* discussed issues such as patent filing, patent patterns and different factors that might influence patenting. *The Journal of Product Innovation* focused more on issues not connected to patents, such as industrial designs and trademarks.¹⁸

While trying to spot the emerging trends in IPR research, the authors identified also suggestions for further research. The most frequent suggestions were the following: IPR issues should be connected to performance and success measures; longitudinal studies and studies on the firm level; IPR issues compared in different countries, regions and industries; and the connection with other functions such as marketing and Human Resource Management (HRM).¹⁹

In the time of the research, the authors concluded that although Intellectual Property is becoming an important field, it is necessary that those involved in innovation management understand the complexity of IPRs. The literature is still relatively scarce, but the researches are becoming increasingly international due to the globalization of trade and changes in the economic order of the world.²⁰

The authors suggest that methodological approaches should be broader and connect IPR-related issues to other performance indicators and functions such as marketing or HRM.²¹ Additionally, research should benefit from qualitative studies that are able to respond to “how” and “why” questions related to this field.²² Conceptual misinterpretation such as IPRs and Intellectual Property used as synonyms, were also spotted by the authors who encouraged researchers to provide clear definitions in order to avoid complications in this interdisciplinary field.²³

¹⁷ Ibid, 506.

¹⁸ Ibid, 506.

¹⁹ Ibid, 507.

²⁰ Ibid, 508.

²¹ Ibid, 508.

²² Ibid, 508.

²³ Ibid, 508.