Corporate Leadership: A Study of the Innovation Skills in Growing in the Corporate World

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Abstract

A Problem exists in complex global markets to successfully coordinate and align the total competence of the value chain required to lean innovation across the global business. This research article overarching question was what is the lived experience of corporate leaders with respect to fostering innovation within companies they lead? The main findings were included, elements of visionary leadership and leaders use of questions operated concurrently in fostering innovation; leadership elements vary in their relative importance depending on the circumstance; leaders' purposeful involvement helps to drive innovation and a broader conceptualisation of leading contributes to innovation.

Keywords: Corporate leadership, Globalisation, Creativity, Innovation, Corporate Culture.

Introduction

Corporate of the 21st century is experiencing a changing environment characterised by technological innovations, networking and information technology advances (Lev & Zambon, 2003). Global markets and economic fluctuations facilitate competitive forces and radical change (Burnes, 2004). Networked environments enable individuals to work across corporate boundaries and externally with alliance partners (Grobman, 2005). Corporate leaders who remove internal filters, translate vision and open their

corporate to the pressures of change reinvent growth by looking outward to collaborate, empower and enable transformation through others (Sanford & Taylor, 2006).

Competing in global markets increases the formation of collaborative relationships with different corporate that possess similar characteristics in certain areas and dissimilar or complementary characteristics in other areas (Sarkar, Echambadi, Cavusgil & Aulakh, 2001). New product development cycle times improve when corporate pool the competencies of strategic partners (Gupta & Souder, 1998). Innovation improves when corporate coordinate and collaborate with knowledge personnel from other corporate (Balakrishnan & Genunes, 2004). The internet blurs market borders, creating the need for innovation to redefine competitive rules (Claud-Gaudillat & Quelin, 2006).

Background of the Problem

The global economy creates risk and opportunity, forcing corporate to make dramatic improvements, not only to compete and prosper but also to survive (Kotter, 1996; Lev & Zambon, 2003). Competing forces moved by globalisation, deregulation and network technologies create pressures for productivity improvement (Champy, 2003). Friedman"s (2005) research suggested a trend toward massive investment information technology that provides a platform for delivering intellectual work globally. Network standards that focus on specific needs allow corporate to communicate and innovate (Palmisano, 2006). The power of the internet provides new forms of e-collaboration, allowing corporate to build coalitions, projects and products together (Friedman, 2005).

Global environments are becoming more open and time-based, wherein impatient

customers favour corporate that proactively innovate to meet emerging trends (Hunt, Ketchen & Slater, 2004). To improve business performance, corporate must develop new leadership skills to innovate and create with external partners (Sonnenfeld, 2004). Changing entrenched cultures and learning to collaborate represents a new competency that leaders must address to develop a competitive edge (Sanford & Taylor, 2006). The rapidly changing global environment is forcing corporate leaders to change their business models and take a new view of leadership (Phipps, 2004). Corporate leadership is no longer limited to executives holding designated positions but is practised by individuals throughout the corporate and across physical, time and geographic barriers (Safferstone, 2005).

A leader's role is to facilitate a shared leadership system, a corporate that successfully leverages human, information and corporate capital and is flexible,

strategic, action-oriented and learning focused in an environment of radical change (Phipps, 2004). The problem is that most corporate do not have the necessary in-house leadership capabilities needed to implement and execute a leveraged global corporate model (Hennart & Zeng, 2005).

Statement of the Problem

A problem exists in complex global markets in successfully coordinating and aligning the total competence of the value chain required to lead innovation across global strategic alliances (Koudal & Coleman, 2005). Despite the strategic view of leveraging core competencies across external alliance partners to improve innovation, international strategic alliances have been plagued by high failure rates (Kauser & Shaw, 2004). The problem has negatively impacted innovation, with more than 85 percent of new product ideas never making it to

market and of those that do 50 – 70 percent fail (Koudal & Coleman, 2005). A possible cause of the problem in leading innovation is the difficulty of coordinating and aligning intellectual assets across alliance partners (Contractor, 2005). There is lack of leadership theory to assist in understanding how leaders coordinate and align intellectual assets to successfully implement innovation externally across strategic alliances (Koudal & Coleman, 2005) and a theoretical framework has been constructed.

Purpose of the Study

Globalisation creates the need for corporate to unlearn from the traditional top-down vertical corporate structure, to develop foresight into the future and to design a strategic architecture of core competencies needed to dominate future markets (Hamel & Prahalad, 1994). To capture global market leadership, corporate must think outside individual

business units by pursuing resource leverage between coalitions of corporate. Leaders must take a different view of human capital, they must see personnel as a portfolio of knowledge agents who offer competencies positioned to create and innovate (Hamel & Prahalad, 2004). The challenge to accelerate and convert capability building into performance improvement emphasizes the need to develop a tight focus on areas of specialisation and accelerate learning (Hagel & Brown, 2005).

Significance of the Problem

Corporate find it difficult to lead innovation externally due to the wide range of structures and corporate forms, a large variety of motivators for alliance formation and the multiplicity of roles played by alliance partners (Contractor, 2005). These difficulties force leaders to drive change that enables alliance partners to collaborate using a wide range of

diverse roles from within industry partners, competitors and suppliers. The complexity of open environments creates the need for trust, communication, reputation and learning.

Corporate leadership must provide clear direction and leadership to motivate, encourage and reward activities that encourage innovation (Davila et al., 2006). Innovation must be a daily part of the culture and success should depend on the business model and technology model integration. The culture must be one that fosters communication internally and externally with the willingness to change, explore and innovate. Leaders and corporate must overcome and defeat corporate antibodies that threaten the execution and success metrics (Davila et al., 2006).

Review of Literature

The global competitive environment of most organisations is becoming

increasingly dynamic and increased consumer demand, operational pace and a competitive marketplace will force organisations to innovate simultaneously in multiple venues and in overlapping time frames (Nadler & Tushman, 1999; Karakas, 2009). Contemporary workplace challenges include the demand for innovation as leaders' tech creativity into the fabric of organisations (Bennis, 2005; Shavinina, 2011). Many corporations create formal work groups with primary responsibility for research and the development for new ideas involving products and improvements to work processes because leaders at all levels can create conditions for innovation (Isaksen & Ekvall, 2010; Gupta, 2011). Corporate leaders provide challenging work for their followers in daily operations, long-term goals and vision. Corporate leaders provide freedom for followers to make decisions about the work process.

Trust and openness are conditions enabling emotional safety in relationships. A reasonable amount of idea time facilitates the creation of new ideas. Playfulness and humour are the conditions enabling spontaneity in the creative workplace. Corporate leaders need to handle conflicts and debates arising in the innovation team while tolerating the risk of uncertainty and ambiguity (Isaksen & Ekvall, 2010; Gupta, 2011).

Kouzes and Posner (1995) categorised patterns of effective leadership practices, including inspiring a shared vision, challenging the process modelling the way, enabling others to act and encouraging the heart. Each category has a task – relation – or change – orientation. The practice of challenging the process involves corporate leaders' willingness to change the status quo and seek innovative ways to improve the corporation or product outcomes.

Contemporary corporate leaders should be flexible and mentally agile to identify and exploit emergent opportunities in the dynamic environment. Given the dynamic, global postmodern environment, traditional standard practices of corporate leadership offer limited insight for dealing with challenges such as adapting to rapid change and enabling faster learning (Davenport, 1998). Standard corporate leadership practices have been about control and efficiency rather than with adaptive change and learning.

Corporate leaders are willing to experiment and accept the inherent risk associated with change. Such practices correspond to Ekvall's leadership behaviours, including challenging and risk-taking that are change - oriented. Creative endeavours require taking risks, experimenting and challenging the status quo (Oke, Munshi & Walumbwa, 2009). Taking risks in pursuit of relevant

opportunities is an important leadership practice (Singh & Das, 2008).

Innovation with its accompanying risk factor is important, yet many corporations are risk adverse. Risk should be calculated with rigorous critical analysis. Corporate Leadership is contingent on dynamic environmental conditions whereby the effect of environment dynamics on the effectiveness of leadership behaviours is related to corporate innovation (Jansen, Vera & Crossan, 2009; Kornai, 2010).

Environmental dynamism is characterised by the rate of unpredicted change (De Hoogh, Den Hartog & Koopman, 2005). Empowering leadership behaviour is important in dynamic environments such as start-up corporations attempting high growth while operating under dynamic conditions (Hmeileski & Ensley, 2007). Corporate leadership dynamism related to flexibility and adaptability can be referred to as change-oriented leadership

behaviour. Most people associated central characteristics such as self - reliance, self - sufficient and risk-taking with corporate leadership (Singh & Pathardikar, 2010).

Effective corporate leaders have the ability to envision a compelling future and a predictive capacity to anticipate trends (Thompson, Grahek, Phillips & Fay, 2008). Corporate leadership requires seeing the future of the organisation and anticipating opportunities and risks. Vision helps direct followers' efforts toward quality innovative outcomes (Mumford & Gustafson, 1988; Dervitsiotis, 2011).

The practice of inspiring a shared vision involves leaders envisioning the future and creating an ideal image of the potential organisational outcome. Through the vision, corporate leaders motivate and enlist others in the compelling possibilities of the future. Inspirational leadership includes team attitudinal outcomes such as

trust in leadership and cohesion (Gallenkamp, Picot, Welpe, Wigand & Riedel, 2011). Relation - oriented emotional intelligence is related to inspirational leadership and leadership effectiveness (Chopra & Kanji, 2010).

Visionary leaders evoke images of the future, influence moods; establish specific objectives and their influence changes people's thinking about potential outcomes. Visionary leaders strive to develop new approaches to long-standing problems and create excitement in work activities. Visionary leaders are willing to engage in risky ventures, especially when the rewards are high and they influence the opinions and attitudes of others of the corporate organisation. The leaders' task is multifunctional; they have a complex integrative task (Row, 2001).

Enabling others to act is a practice corporate leaders use by fostering collaboration and building team spirit (Wood, 2012). Corporate Leaders empower others to participate in decision making, create an atmosphere of trust and manage conflict astutely. Supportive leadership, particularly the support of ideas, relates to team cohesiveness (Wendt, Euwema & Van Emmerik, 2009) in which the productive capacity of the team depends on its degree of cohesiveness and the support of an effective leader.

Openness and accessibility of the corporate leader that can foster follower involvement in creative work are characteristics of inclusive leadership practice (Carmeli, Reiter - Palmon & Riz, 2010). Inclusive leaders are collaborative, share decision making and engage in participative practices resulting in cooperative problem solving and effective strategic choices (Werder & Holzhausen, 2009; Bry, Vallee & France, 2011).

The practice of modelling the way as defined by Kouzes and Posner (1995) includes creating standards of excellence (i.e., task-oriented) and setting an example for others to follow (i.e., relation - oriented). Corporate leaders should be receptive and create an inclusive environment that fosters the positive human potential of all employees because inclusion has positive organisational effects such as increased quality, creativity and productivity (Huffman, Watrous-Rodriguez & King, 2008). Leaders should build support for innovation through transformational leadership, specifically through vision, performance expectations, role modelling and empowerment (Sarros, Cooper & Santora, 2008).

Leadership must accelerate the innovation drive after the initial wins, demanding teamwork, accountability and innovative solutions. Recognizing and celebrating successes in a way to reinforce leadership commitment and communicate innovation expectations routinely and repetitively (Gupta, 2011). Leaders mobilise followers by encouraging right actions, setting high expectations and encouraging the best (Karakas, 2009).

Corporate Leaders communicate values and expectations by role modelling actions showing loyalty, self - sacrifice, dedication and commitment. In their daily actions, leaders communicate their priorities and concerns by their decisions. The leaders should convey management's expectations of the team, including schedule, budget and goal outcomes while engaging the members in project discussions.

Corporate leaders can foster creative thinking by giving time and mental space for ideas to evolve; time pressure creates the sense of urgency leading to concentrated energy and effort (Stoll & Temperley, 2009; Laster, 2011). Because innovation involves idea generation, effective leaders provide sufficient idea

time (Makri & Scandura, 2010) to elaborate on ideas and produce novel work. Corporate leaders establish and nurture networks of innovation to create space for their research (Monsted & Hansson, 2010).

Leaders can provide relations - oriented behaviours such as organising feedback, articulating recognition and distributing rewards (Yukl & Lepsinger, 2005; De Jong & Den Hartog, 2007). Barriers are the failure to understand effective change implementation techniques and lack of management recognition or rewards for those who change (Gilley et al., 2008). Reward programs should be designed to help an organisation achieve specific change outcomes, such as creativity and innovation, teamwork and cooperation (Ulrich, Zenger Smallwood, 1999).

Corporate leaders' unique view and interpretation of situations are key to understanding innovation leadership manifested by the level of intellectual functioning, meta-cognitive abilities and extra - cognitive abilities (Shavinina, 2011). The first category of manifestation of innovative leadership is characterised by a) the level of intellectual functioning b) properties of associative intelligence to discern connections between concepts and c) properties of process intelligence referring to the ability to synthesise diverse information to use in critical thinking.

Methodology

There are two principal research paradigms that can be used in business research, namely – the positivistic and a phenomenological / interpretivism paradigm. According to Bryman and Bell (2007), positivism is an epistemological position that advocates the application of the methods of the natural sciences to the study of social reality and beyond. The role of positivism as stated by Anderson (2004) resides in searching for facts in terms of clarifying the relationship between variables before identifying a data collection pattern through statistical approaches as followed in quantitative research procedures. According to Collis

and Hussey (2003), the positivistic approach concentrates on facts and the causes of social events, paying modest respect to the subjective state of the individual.

The quantitative research is built on a numerical measurement of specific characteristics related to a phenomenon. Quantitative approaches employ deductive logic, moving from the general to the specific. The tools used to carry out quantitative research tend to be surveys and questionnaires (Coombes, 2001). It is a very structured approach and is most often focused on objectivity, generalisability and reliability (Collis & Hussey, 2003). The key advantage of the quantitative approach, therefore, is that it is based on fact and reliable data that enables researchers to generalize their findings to the population from which the sample has been drawn.

A non-experimental research design is an appropriate approach to determine if a specific treatment (Innovation skills of a corporate leader) influences an outcome (corporate leadership skills and effectiveness of the corporate) using a sample that is not randomly assigned to a treatment or comparator group (Creswell, 2014).

A questionnaire according to Collies and Hussey (2003) can be used to gather data when the issues which arise are likely to be confidential and sensitive and give respondents more time to consider their answers. The questionnaire survey, as defined by McDaniel and Gates (2002) is comprised of a set of questions designed to generate the evidence necessary to accomplish the objectives of the research study. It is a method of getting answers to the research questions based on designing specific questions to be answered by the research participants (Robson, 2004).

Questionnaires as a survey method may be viewed as a comparatively simple and uncomplicated means of examining participants' attitudes, values, beliefs and motives. When the survey includes sensitive issues, a questionnaire affords a high level of confidentiality and anonymity (Robson, 2004).

The questionnaire consisted of five close-ended questions with an open-ended section at the end of the questionnaire for participants to add any further comments about their perception of the

psychodynamic skills. The response scales took the form of the Likert Scale. The Likert scale is one of the most widely used response scales in research and is used to evaluate behaviour, attitude or another phenomenon on a continuum. Rating scales simplify and more easily quantify peoples' behaviours or attitudes (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). A neutral response option has not been given which might prove a bit disastrous if the majority of the respondents decide to choose this, thus posing a danger of not being able to conduct an optimal evaluation.

The sample size is a significant characteristic of any empirical study in which the goal is to make assumptions about a population based on a sample. Indeed, the sample size used in the study was determined based on the data collection figures and the need to obtain sufficient statistical power (Saunders et al., 2009). Saunders et al., added that the larger the sample size, lower the likely error in generalizing to the population.

The survey was distributed to a purposeful sample of 300 participants includes corporate leaders from a different spectrum, represents different areas of

Table 1: Finding New Ways

specialization and comprises different sectors. Statisticians contend that as a sample size increases, variability (i.e., effort variance) decreases and power increases. As power increases to detect a false null hypothesis, there is an increased risk of falsely rejecting a true null hypothesis.

Analysis

The survey asked a series of questions in order to establish whether there is a relationship between innovation skills of a corporate leader and the effectiveness of the corporate. The focus of the research and the survey is to find out whether the prominence of innovation skills is increasing in the growing corporate world. This section provides a summary of the information that was collected through a questionnaire. The following tables and figures provide a snapshot of innovation skills that are needed for a corporate leader.

	Indicator	Non-Agree			Agree		
		Strongly Disagree	**Dis-Agree**	**Total**	**Agree**	**Strongly Agree**	**Total**
1	In your opinion, a leader looks for new ways to create value in products, processes and services.	51 (17)	75 (25)	126 (42)	66 (22)	108 (36)	174 (58)

The respondents were asked whether a corporate leader looks for new ways to create value in products, processes and services. As good as 58% of respondents agreed positively that a corporate leader should look for new ways to create value in products, processes and services.
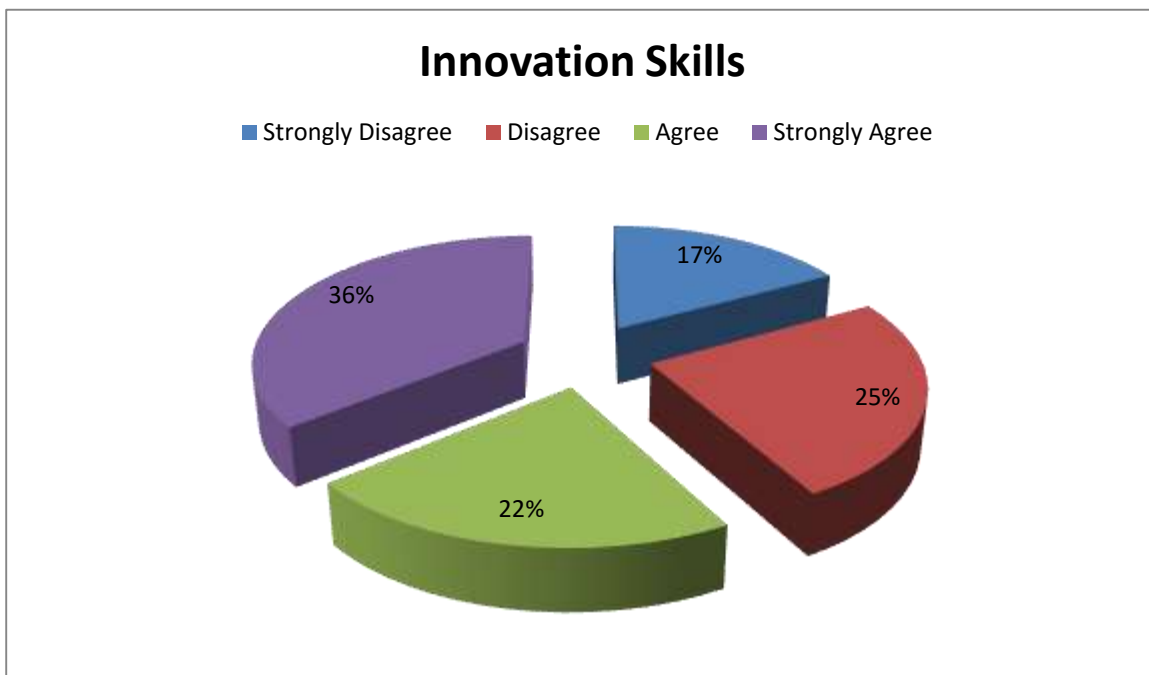
Figure 1: Finding New Ways

Table 2: New Situations

	Indicator	Non-Agree			Agree		
		Strongly Disagree	**Dis-Agree**	**Total**	**Agree**	**Strongly Agree**	**Total**
2	In your opinion, a leader has confidence to apply his / her skills in new and	54 (18)	66 (22)	120 (40)	66 (22)	114 (38)	180 (60)

unfamiliar situations.							

The respondents were asked whether a corporate leader should have confidence to apply to the skills in new and unfamiliar situations. As high as 60% of respondents accepted positively that a corporate leader should exhibit confidence and apply new skills in new and even unfamiliar situations to lead corporate successfully.
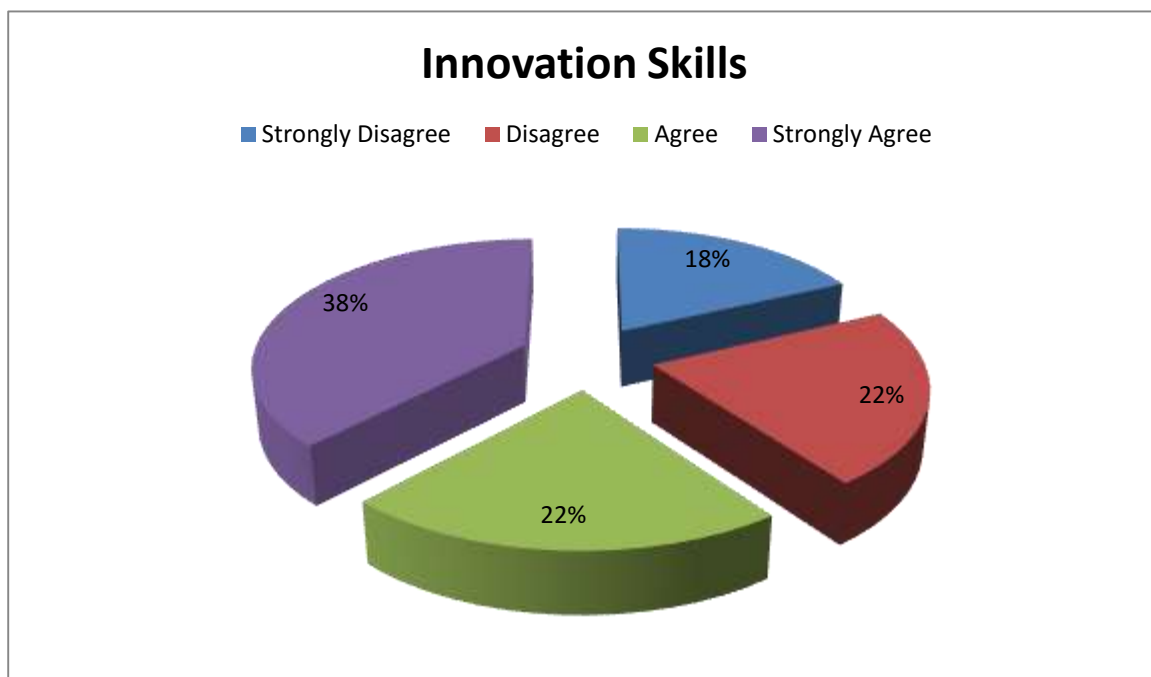
Figure 2: New Situations

Table 3: Risk Taking Attitude

	Indicator	Non-Agree			Agree		
		Strongly Disagree	Dis-Agree	Total	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
3	In your opinion, a leader supports risk by monitoring and evaluating decisions and actions.	48 (16)	108 (36)	156 (52)	81 (27)	63 (21)	144 (48)

The respondents were asked whether a corporate leader should support risk-taking attitude by monitoring and evaluating decisions and actions. Surprisingly, 52% of respondents gave negative response which supports that a corporate leader should not support risk-taking attitude by

monitoring and evaluating decisions and actions.
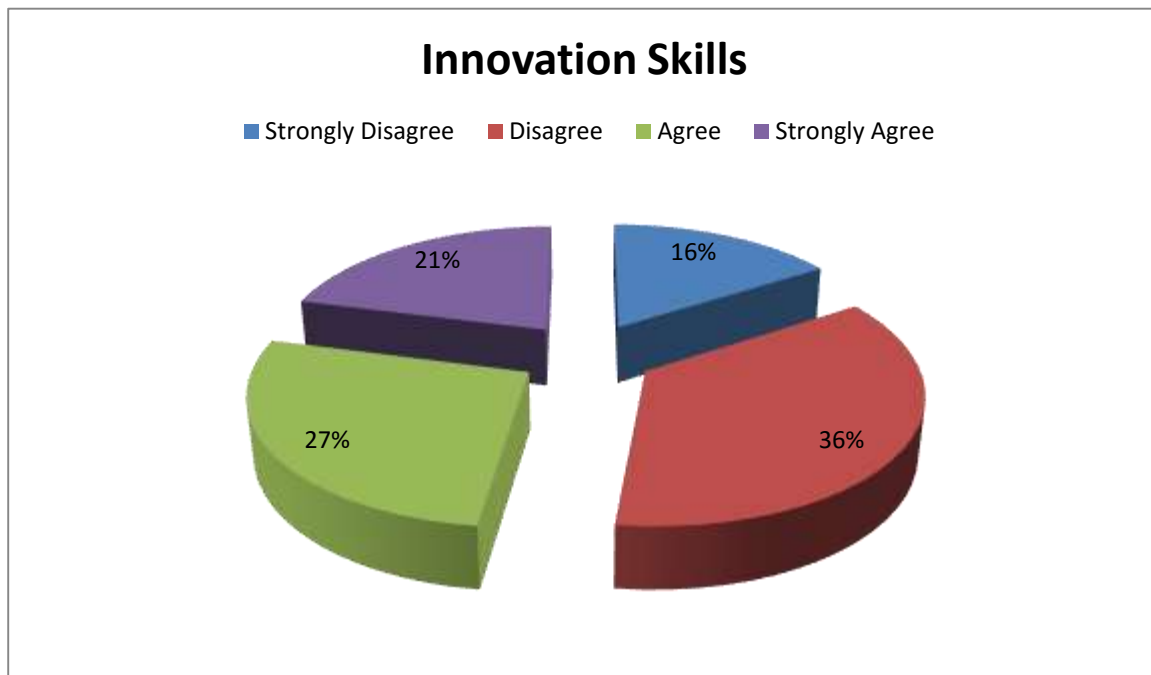
Figure 3: Risk Taking Attitude

Innovation Skills

■ Strongly Disagree ■ Disagree ■ Agree ■ Strongly Agree

Table 4: Rewarding New Ideas

	Indicator	Non-Agree			Agree		
		Strongly Disagree	Dis-Agree	Total	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
4	In your opinion, a leader recognizes and reward original ideas and ideas for improvement.	36 (12)	90 (30)	126 (42)	42 (14)	132 (44)	174 (58)

The respondents were asked whether a corporate leader recognises and reward original ideas and ideas for improvement. As good as 58% of respondents agreed positively that a corporate leader should encourage by recognising original ideas and ideas for improvement and at times they should be rewarded fairly.
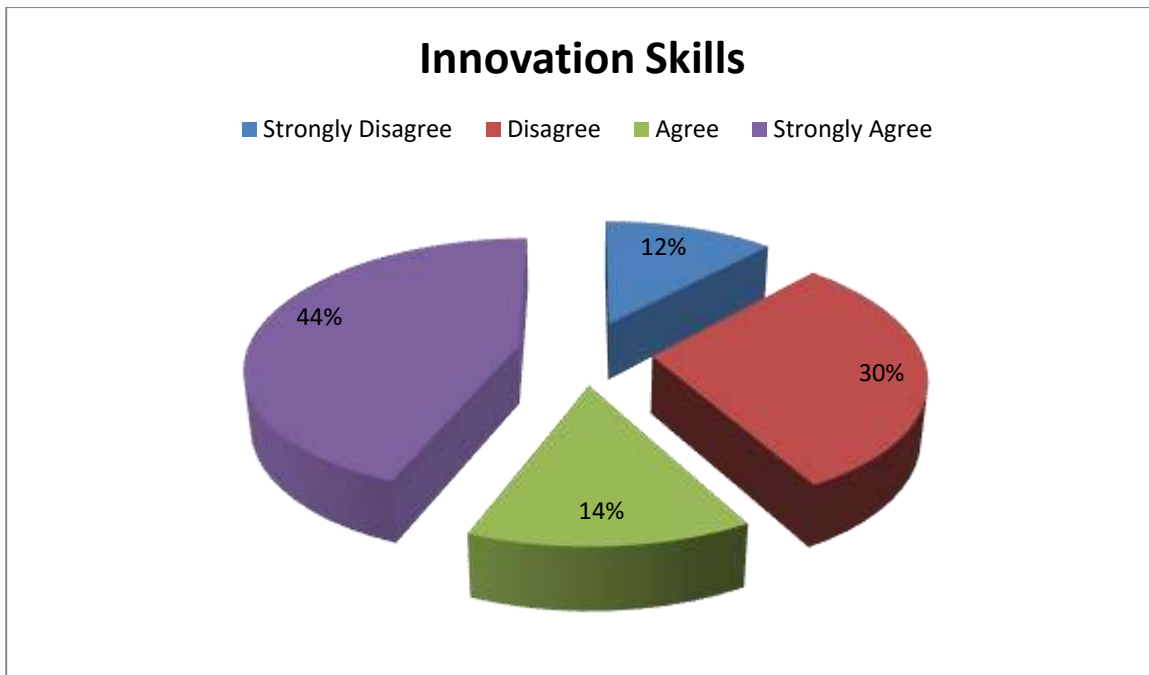
Figure 4: Rewarding New Ideas

Innovation Skills

■ Strongly Disagree ■ Disagree ■ Agree ■ Strongly Agree

Table 5: Identifying and Solving Problems

	Indicator	Non-Agree			Agree		
		Strongly Disagree	Dis-Agree	Total	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
5	In your opinion, a leader is good at identifying problems and potential solutions.	33 (11)	78 (26)	111 (37)	63 (21	126 (42)	189 (63)

The respondents were aksed whether a corporate leader is good at identifying problems and potential solutions. As high as 63% of respondents supported positively that a corporate leaders should identify problems and sutdy the reasons for eruption of those problems and find suitable solutions to solve those problems and run the corporate successfully.

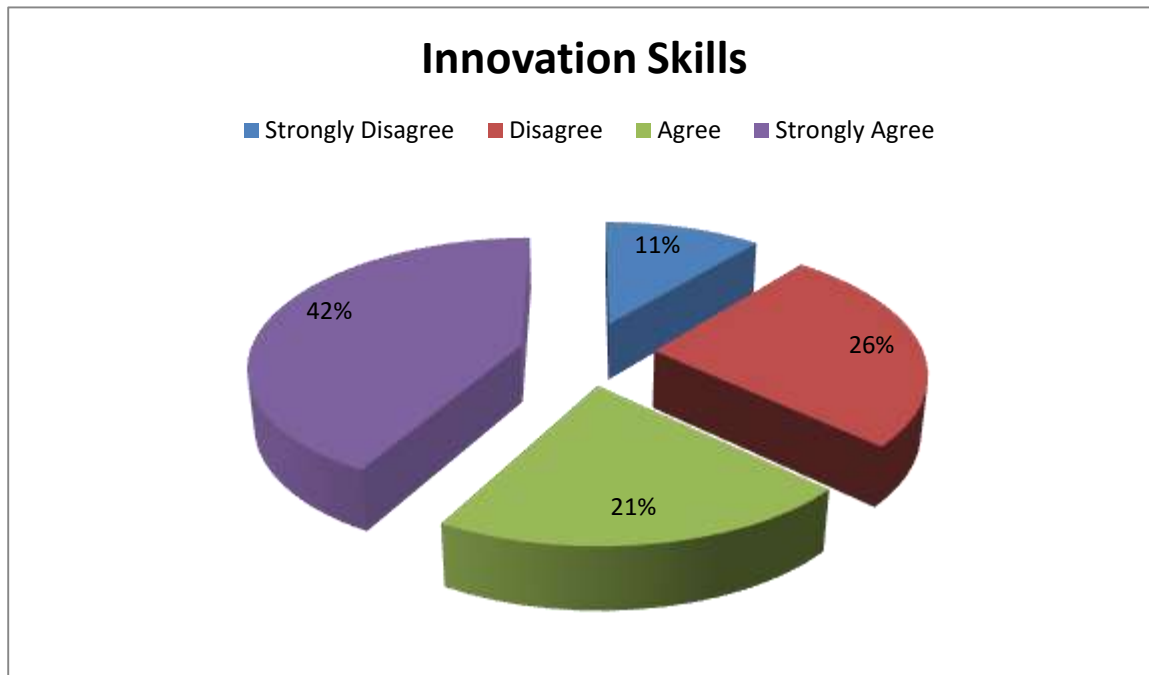**Figure 5: Identifying and Solving Problems**

Table 6: Consolidation

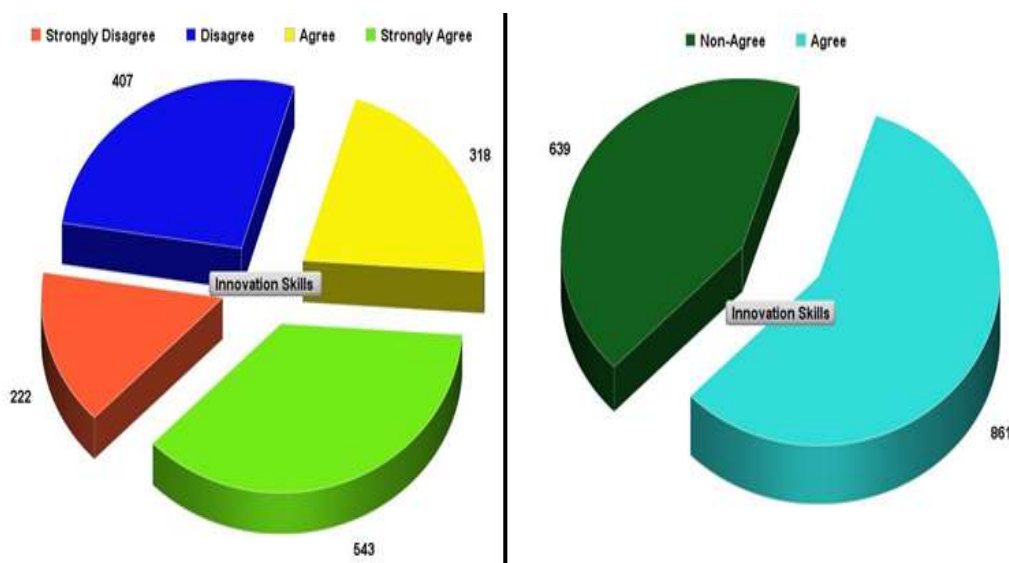|	Indicator	Non-Agree			Agree		
		Strongly Disagree	Dis-Agree	Total	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
1	In your opinion, a leader looks for new ways to create value in products, processes, services.	51 (17)	75 (25)	126 (42)	66 (22)	108 (36)	174 (58)
2	In your opinion, a leader has confidence to apply his / her skills in new and unfamiliar situations.	54 (18)	66 (22)	120 (40)	66 (22)	114 (38)	180 (60)
3	In your opinion, a leader supports risk by monitoring and evaluating decisions and actions.	48 (16)	108 (36)	156 (52)	81 (27)	63 (21)	144 (48)
4	In your opinion, a leader recognizes and reward original ideas and ideas for improvement.	36 (12)	90 (30)	126 (42)	42 (14)	132 (44)	174 (58)
5	In your opinion, a leader is good at identifying problems and potential solutions.	33 (11)	78 (26)	111 (37)	63 (21	126 (42)	189 (63)

Total	222 (74)	407 (139)	639 (213)	318 (106)	543 (181)	861 (287)

Note: The figures given in parentheses indicate percentages of participants and non-participants. The value of Chi-square ($\chi2$) is 5.17 among participants with disagree and agree. The table values at 5 percent with 4 degrees of freedom are 9.48.

Table 6 provides the data showing of these different aspects of the Innovation Skills of the corporate leadership. It is found that overall 213 percent of the participants did not agree and 287 percent agreed. Out of 213 percent of not agreed the highest percent denied i.e.52 percent in the aspects of a leader supports risk by monitoring and evaluating decisions and actions. And lowest denied i.e. 37 percent in a leader is good at identifying problems and potential solutions. And out of overall 281 percent of agreed respondents 63 percent are agreed in the aspects of a leader is good at identifying problems and potential solutions and lowest percent agreed in the area of a leader supports risk by monitoring and evaluating decisions and actions.

Figure 6: Consolidation

A comparative analysis is made to know the impact of Innovation Skills of corporate leadership, in between agreed participants with the non-agreed participants consisting of different relevant indicators of Innovation Skills. The significant of difference between agreed participants with the non-agreed participants consisting of different relevant indicators of Innovation skills is measured with Chi-square ($\chi2$) test. Here, the table value of Chi-square ($\chi2$) for 4 degrees of freedom at 5% level of significance is 9.48 whereas the result of ($\chi2$) test found to be less than this value. So, there is a significant impact of Innovation Skills on corporate leadership.

Conclusions

The causal factors represent the rapidly growing and complex global economy, intense competition and technology advances. To facilitate the process, thought leaders create frameworks for collaboration through open sourcing. Thought leaders open the environment to a broader range of people and involve them in the decision-making process. Thought leaders make a difference, articulate the vision and grow next generation leaders. They encourage sharing, involvement and giving ideas back. Thought leaders assess the environment and develop strategies to align and coordinate alliance partners to meet unmet customer needs. With a clear focus on serving the customer, a rich flow of innovative ideas continuously improve and meet the emerging needs of customers.

Business is becoming increasingly complex in the competitive global markets. Leading corporate recognise the need to change. Innovation pools and leverages the core competencies. Thought leaders are critically important to develop innovative strategic models, overcoming complex factors and transforming the process. Innovative corporate develop an environment open to innovation. Thought

leaders engrain an innovative culture by sharing their beliefs, values and vision of the future. Creating an innovative mindset starts with developing a culture that empowers personnel to think about future possibilities and to look outward to embrace complementary skills.

In innovative environments, thought leaders enable and encourage collaboration that empowers personnel to think creatively. Giving knowledge personnel a voice and willingness to highlight their work empowers creative thought focused on the customer. Valuing the people who make the process work adds value to the customer and creates a space for innovation to take place.

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