

BOOK REVIEW

RESEARCH METHODS IN SERVICE INNOVATION

Flemming Sørensen and Francesco Lapenta (editors),
Edward Elgar Publishing UK, 2017

Daniela Tatiana ȘOITU *

Innovation become a flag word for many and divers areas. Starting from research, industry and marketing, the innovation emerged, during last years and has been spread in policies, practices, and visions. The rapid development and large acceptance of the innovation miracle called for substantiation of the theoretical approaches, outlining and checking the methods of research, investigating the ways and areas of application.

The editors of this book are professors on Roskilde University, Denmark, in close areas: Flemming Sørensen come from the Department of Social Sciences and Business, and Francesco Lapenta work in the Department of Communication and Humanities. The first editor has a background on economy, signing and co-editing other studies and books: *Handbook on the Experience Economy* (co-edited with Jon Sundbo 2013), while the second one, Francesco Lapenta, is known for his contribution on visual research methods (Lapenta 2011).

Actually, the university these authors came from – Roskilde University, Denmark – have a growing interest on innovation and innovative research, policies and practices. It starts from economy and management (Sundbo 2001; 2003), but goes further to tertiary sector (Sundbo, Toivonen 2011). The publishing house is an independent one dedicated to new ideas and writings.

Research methods in service innovation comprise 12 contributions. It starts with an introductory chapters signed by the co-editors (Sørensen and Lapenta): *Service innovation research methods*. New and challenging research methods are following; some of these are intending to develop a method for quantitative measurement in service firm (Sundbo, J.), to look for “the critical incident technique and everyday innovation” (Fuglsang, L.), or on “the laddering method” (Grünbaum, N.N.); other targets social

* Professor PhD, Department of Sociology and Social Work, Faculty of Philosophy and Social-Political Sciences, “Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University of Iași, CompEd Project manager; Carol I 11, 700506, Iași, Romania; e-mail: danielag@uaic.ro

networks and “interpretivist analyses” (chapter seven, Møller and Sørensen) or see “narratives as driver for co-creating new stories of service” (chapter five, Hansen). Next to these, three interesting chapters are presenting and analysing “visual techniques for opening and presenting the black box of service innovation process” by a mapping activity (Rørboek Olesen, chapter six), “technology-oriented scenario analysis for innovation research” (Lapenta, chapter nine) and “the role of social media data for research on user-driven innovation (Supola, chapter eight). The same author (Ada Scupola) announce “future workshops for idea generation in engaged service innovation research” (chapter ten). Flemming Sørensen develop and test “new innovation process” on “field experiments” (chapter eleven) and Claire Esther Staddon Forder are underlining “learnings from the working with a triple helix framework” from “service innovation in complex research projects” (chapter twelve).

The authors are not on their first study on this topic and each contribution reflect reviews from literature. On the *Introduction* of the tenth chapter for instance, Scupola (p. 166) mention that: “user-driven innovation, co-creation and open innovation are all concepts emphasizing the potential of opening up organisational innovation processes by inviting external stakeholders to participate in innovation”, citing Sundbo and Toivonen (2011) and Alam and Perry (2002). The main external contributors to open innovation can be: stakeholders, suppliers, governmental agencies, competitors and also customers. The role of costumers, of users, and their potential is presented, discussed and illustrated by this author, using “Future workshops in idea-generation phase of service innovation process” but in a new context: “that of research library services of Roskilde University”, as an “engaged research”. The main argument come from a dual challenge Van de Ven (2007) has identified between research and practice: “academics need to put theories into practice and managers need to put practice into theory”; this may be solved “by studying complex problems *with* and/or *for* practitioners and other stakeholders”, as “engaged scholarship” which will increase, as the author conclude, “the likelihood of advancing knowledge for science and professions” (Scupola, pp. 168-169; 177).

On the next chapter, Flemming Sørensen “argue that field experiments have specific and strong potential in service innovation research” (p. 181); the “knowledge is highly relevant for researchers as well as for practitioners” and “often easy to transfer to other service contexts” (p. 199).

The book is useful for academics, but also for practitioners, for researchers and students. New and not so new research methods are tested on different

contexts and user-driven innovation is valued and questioned. The background of each method is underlined, the theoretical phases or steps are explained and how to apply these in new context following as exemplifications and arguments. Even the social contexts can be surprising – hotels, libraries etc – the reader is invited to see the organisation and social network beyond those he / she use to consider. All studies are ended up with “Learning points” and “discussion topics” opening new challenges.

References

1. Alam, I. and Perry, C. (2002). A customer-oriented new service development process. *Journal of Services Marketing*, **16**(6), 515-534.
2. Fuglsang, L. and Sundbo, J. (eds) (2003). *Innovation as strategic reflexivity*. Taylor and Francis, UK.
3. Fuglsang, L. (ed.) (2008). *Innovation and the Creative Process: Towards Innovation with Care*. Edward Elgar Publishing, UK.
4. Lapenta, F. (2011). Some Theoretical and Methodological Views on Photo Elicitation. In Margolis, E. and Pawels, L. (eds). *The SAGE Handbook of Visual Research Methods*. Sage, ch. 11.
5. Sørensen, F. and Lapenta, F. (eds) (2017). *Research methods in service innovation*. Edward Elgar Publishing, UK.
6. Sørensen, F. and Sundbo, J. (eds) (2013). *Handbook on the Experience Economy*. Edward Elgar Publishing, UK.
7. Sundbo, J. and Toivonen, M. (eds) (2011). *User-based Innovation in Services*. Edward Elgar Publishing, UK.
8. Sundbo, J., (2001). *The Strategic Management of Innovation: A Sociological and Economic Theory*. Edward Elgar Publishing, UK.
9. Van de Ven, A.H. (2007). *Engaged scholarship: creating knowledge for science and practice*. Oxford University Press, Oxford.

