

# The Occupational Mandate of an Innovation Intermediary: Influencing Innovation in the Digital Space

John Barker

Doctoral Researcher

Professor Nick Clifton (Director of Studies) Professor Gareth Loudon (2<sup>nd</sup> Supervisor)



Cardiff  
Metropolitan  
University

Prifysgol  
Metropolitan  
Caerdydd

# Aims



To explore:

How and why does an innovation intermediary facilitate innovation in Wales?

# What and why of innovation intermediaries

**WHAT?** Facilitate innovation in a digital space



**WHY?**

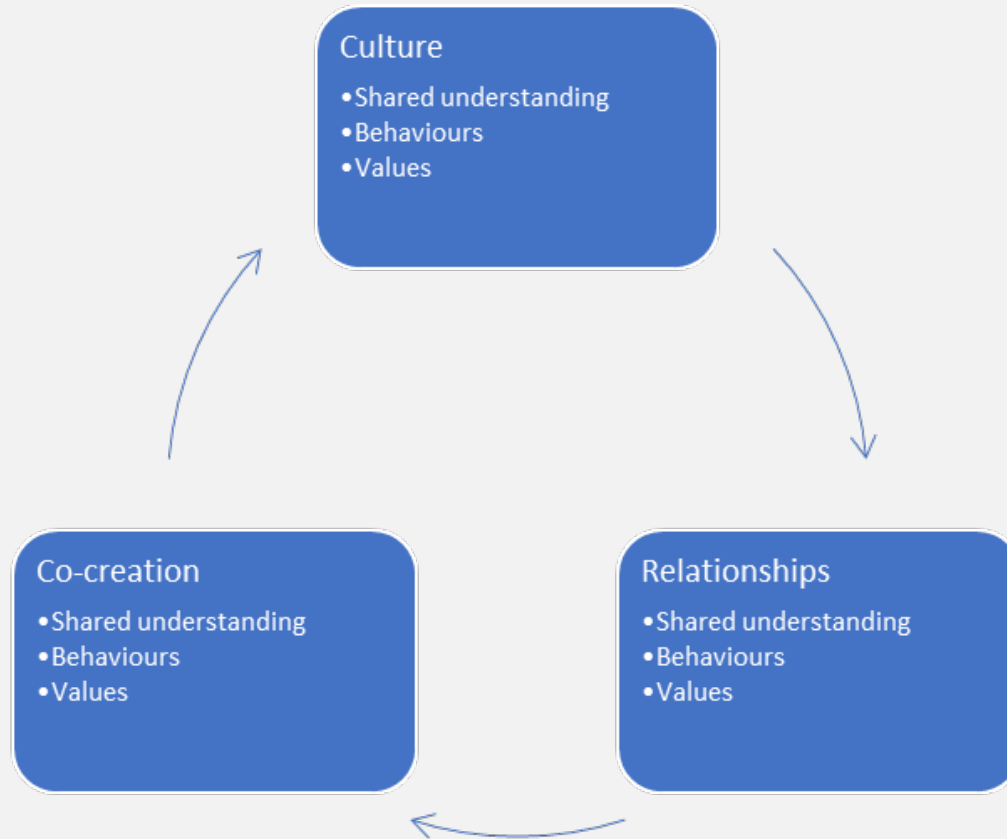
Worth 1.6 billion



# Why? | Theoretical underpinning

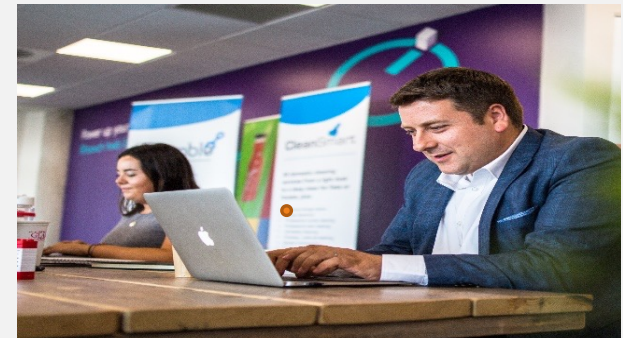
- 1) UNSEEN INNOVATION: Innovation needs to be studied by “borrowing research techniques from other disciplines [including]... ethnography”. Hossain and Anees-ur-Rehman's (2016)
- 2) UNDERSTANDING: Opportunity to create an “occupational mandate” Fayard, Stigliani and Bechky (2017) to create further understanding of innovation intermediary.
- 3) GAP IN LITERATURE: Current literature focused on:
  - Services provided by the intermediary (Aquilani, Abbate and Dominici, 2016)
  - Benefits derived from the intermediary's services (Hossain and Islam, 2015);
  - Challenges of working with intermediaries (Kokshagina, Le Masson and Bories, 2017)
  - Perspectives of solution providers (Hossain, 2018).

# Occupational Mandate: Conceptual Framework



Garud, Tuertscher, and Van De Ven (2013)

# Research Context



# Methodology & Methods

## 1) **Observational Case Study Method**

Physical and Virtual (Slack messaging system) Observations Captured (Minzberg, 1973)

Martinko and Gardner's (1985, p. 676) widely used criteria for gathering ethnographic data:

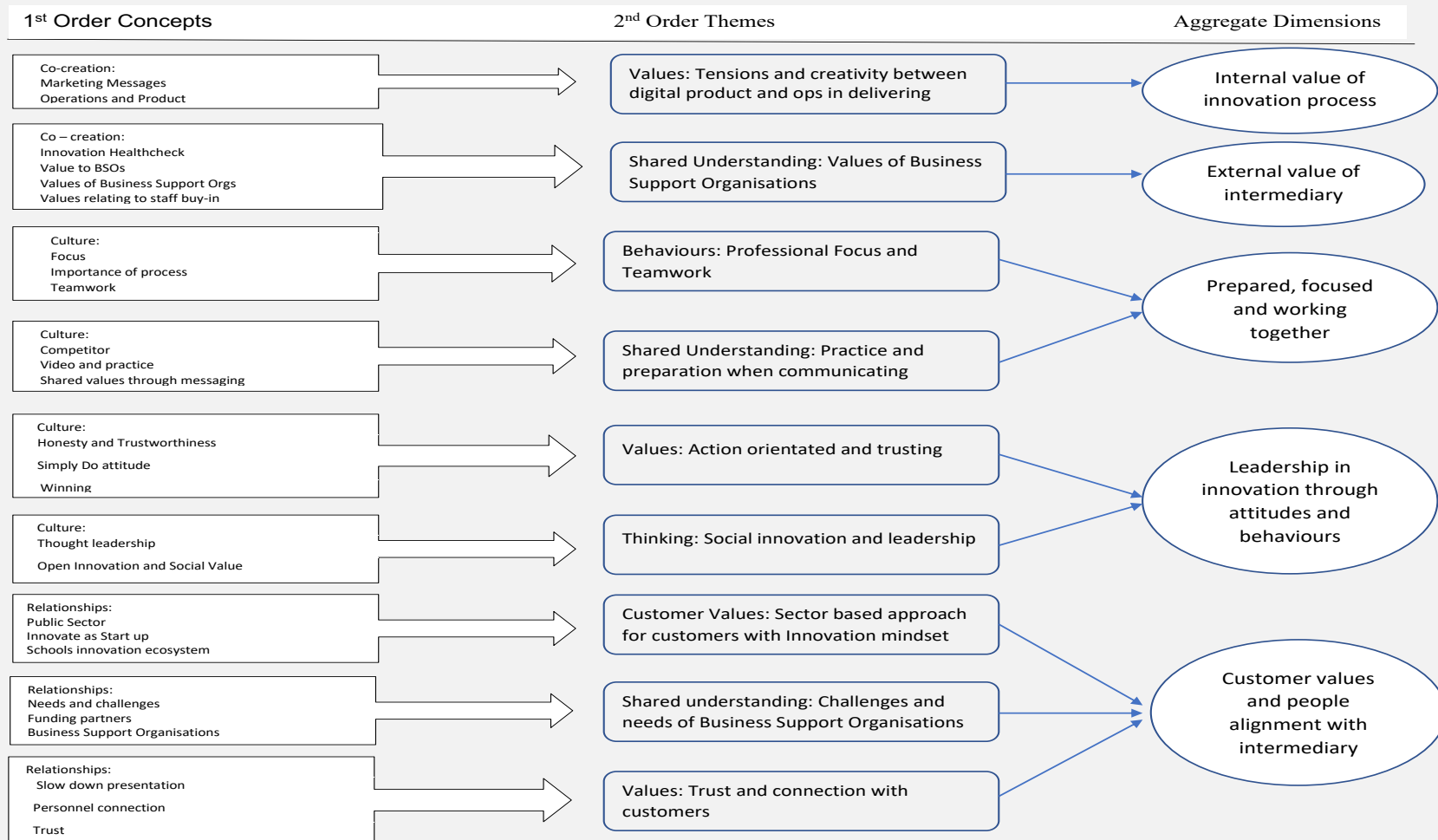
- the method relies on observation by a person other than the subject;
- the method must rely on the use of category systems; and
- the method does not use randomized activity sampling procedures”.

Spradley's (1980, p. 85) exemplar for recording data and uses categorisation of observations with factual data around the time, date, and participants involved, alongside the observed behaviours and motivations.

2) **Semi-structured interviews** with innovation intermediary staff – Grounded Theory (Strauss, 1998/Corley and Giola 2004)

# Results & Data Analysis

## Corley and Giola (2004)





# 1) Evidence: Observations



## Culture: Leadership

“Great opportunity to be projected as thought leader by an influencer ”

## Relationships: Values influence innovators and the concept of Business Support Organisations

“Public sector and corporate sector that behaves like the public sector”

## Co-creation: Technology influencing the process

“Our structured innovation process will reduce the time, cost and risk of innovation.”

# 1) Observational Findings | Baseline



## Culture

- Shared understanding: Leadership in Innovation is technology-led
- Shared understanding: Practice and preparation when communicating
- Behaviours: Professional Focus and Teamwork
- Values: Action orientated and trusting

## Co-creation

- Shared understanding: Values of Business Support Organisations
- Values: Tensions and creativity between digital product and ops in delivering innovation

## Relationships

- Shared understanding: Sector based approach for customers who value Innovation
- Shared understanding: Challenges and needs of Business Support Organisations
- Values: Trust and connection with customers

## 2) Evidence: Semi-structured Interviewing



Culture: Leadership in innovation is people and technology-led

“Technology can be an enabler and it can also be a disabler, so for someone who’s not particularly savvy with technology”

Relationships: Values influences innovators

“We’re becoming rather product-driven rather than sector-driven; so we’re solving a problem rather solving a particular, specific industry challenge.”

Co-creation: Importance of digital product and people in delivering innovation

“Collaboration between technology and humans, so not just looking at how I would work with someone else, but also how I would work with a piece of software”

## 2) Semi-structured Interviews Findings | Finalisation



### Culture

- **(1) Shared understanding: Leadership in innovation is people and technology-led**
- Shared understanding: Practice and preparation when communicating
- Behaviours: Professional Focus and Teamwork
- Action orientated and trusting
- Values: Action orientated and trusting



### Co-creation

- Shared understanding: Values of Business Support Organisations
- **(2) Values: Importance of digital product and people in delivering innovation**
- Values: Intrinsic financial value should be present to enable collaboration
- Thinking: Strategic value to innovation is recognised



### Relationships

- Shared understanding: Sector based approach for customers with innovation mindset
- Shared understanding: Knowledge diversity is important within the innovation crowd
- Values: Trust and connection with customers





# Conclusions

**Culture:** Current literature focused on:

- Technology outputs of innovation (Hossain and Islam, 2015)
- Matchmaking nature of the technology (Colombo, Dell’Era and Frattini, 2015; Kokshagina, Le Masson and Bories, 2017; Randhawa *et al.*, 2017),

**New knowledge:** technology leadership and facilitation as an essential part of the innovation process.



**Co-creation:** Current literature focused:

- Open innovation start-ups (Michelino *et al.*, 2017; Usman and Vanhaverbeke, 2017)
- SMEs (Spithoven, Vanhaverbeke and Roijackers, 2013; Santoro *et al.*, 2018)

**New knowledge:** Importance of Business Support Organisations in the innovation process.





# Conclusions



## **Contribution to Knowledge:**

- Reveals the unseen processes of innovation intermediary
- Moves the work of an innovation intermediary along (Aquilani, Abbate and Dominici, 2016; Hossain and Islam, 2015; Kokshagina, Le Masson and Bories, 2017) by understanding these processes.
- Helps understand benefits of growing market and relates to economic growth

## **Relationships:** Current literature focused:

- Private sector economic values in innovation expressed by Bloch and Bugge, (2013);
- Public sector social values in innovation De Vries, Bekkers and Tummers, (2016)

**New knowledge:** Innovation intermediary's values are contradictory and can influence the relationship with the other partners in the innovation process and challenges



Feedback,  
Discussion,  
and  
Questions



Thank you