

Chapter 7

Teacher Activities in Adaptation of Innovative Study Methods at University: Theoretical and Practical Implications


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ABSTRACT

The emergence of various types of educational innovations affect and change not only students learning methods but also teachers' competences and activities. Innovative study methods (ISM) are characterised by novelty to their implementers. Adoption of innovations as well as innovative study methods are faster and better when they are close from cultural-, social-, and value-based perspectives (i.e., when they are adapted). The teacher should have the appropriate competences to adapt, modify educational innovations, as well as study methods according to the students while at the same time not departing from the study program aims and study subject (module) results. The chapter aims to find answers to the research questions: What are the peculiarities of teachers' activities in adapting innovative study methods? How does the adaptation of an innovative study method affect other elements of the pedagogical system course? What are the possible variations in the process of innovative study method adaptation?

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INTRODUCTION

Theoretical Background

Concepts of Adoption and Adaptation

The innovative process in respect to social innovations consists of *4-i-process: idea, intervention, implementation, and impact* (Hochgerner, 2013). An idea of how to deal with the challenges arises in the beginning. Then the most advanced solution and/or suggestion of intervening and solving the problem is sought. In the second stage, several ways of solving the problem can be combined, such as relying on scientific research, combining certain already existing practices in new ways and by changing attitudes or convictions in order to achieve new behaviours (Hochgerner, 2013). The implementation stage includes the dissemination, acceptance/rejection and usage of the innovation. Social innovation goes through change continually as it undergoes various experiments, modifications and transformations. Therefore, it is never considered to be the finished product. In the last stage, innovation is accepted (if it has not been rejected), thus becoming regular daily human activity with a social impact.

In order to evaluate the impact of innovation, it has to be accepted by those users to whom it is meant to be disseminated. The acceptance of innovation is called **adoption**. According to Denning (2012), Zolait (2014), the process of adoption is the stage when the solution to accept or reject the innovation is made. In this stage, users decide whether to learn, accept and use or whether reject new practices, new products or new ways of activity. Hochgerner (2013) agrees that this stage (adoption) is crucial because it determines the success or failure of innovation; this stage determines whether all the efforts were worth it and paid off.

The Essence of Innovation Adoption

The adoption process is divided into further stages or parts. The most prevailing research analysed and discussed in scientific literature (Janiunaite, 2007; Banyte, Salickaite, 2008; AbuJarad, Yusof, 2010; Nemoto, Vasconsellos, Nelson, 2010; Barden, 2012; Gounaris, Koritos, 2012) is Rogers' *Innovation Diffusion Theory* where the process of accepting/rejecting innovation and the variables that influence this process are discussed. The variables are related to the features of innovation, strategies of implementing innovation, communication channels, nature of social system and change agent role. This theory underpins the process of innovation adoption.

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