

The T-shaped professionals' education strategies for service innovation

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Purpose - Scholars (Patricio et al., 2018) noticed the development of an interdisciplinary field of T-shaped researchers and practitioners. Parallel to single discipline education, inter- and multidisciplinary competence approaches have arisen. A prominent view on a contemporary competence is identified as T-shaped professional (Hansen and Oetigner 2001, IfM and IBM 2008, Brown 2009, Spohrer et al. 2010). The purpose of this paper is to advance understanding on the strategies of T-shaped professionals' education for service innovation from a higher education institute's (HEI's) perspective. There is no dispute of the usefulness of T-shaped professionalism (Barile et al., 2012; Barile et al., 2014). Moreover, the T-shaped professional framework identifies generic areas for competences (Demirkan & Spohrer, 2015). Yet, little evidence is available on how T-shaped professionals are educated. The aim of the paper is to introduce and capitalize on the T-shaped professional framework in the interdisciplinary curriculum development. Work ecosystems and workforce are constantly transforming as they pursue innovating service and co-creating value with customers. The understanding of the perspective of Service-Dominant Logic and its implications necessitates understanding the complexities of resource-integrating actors originating from multiple organizations with various competences that are involved in value co-creation. Despite the ever-increasing research on service innovation, little is researched the related education (Djellal and Gallouj 2018). HEIs provide the conditions for educating competences. Yet, the advancement of the contemporary competences in curricula remains inadequate (Ferruzca et al. 2017).

Design/Methodology/approach The qualitative case study explores strategies to develop curriculum for a T-shaped professionalism. An analytical tool is developed within the study, which draws upon three postgraduate programs in service innovation and design. **Findings** We found that there is 1) value for an analytical tool to assess curriculum evolution, 2) identified three dimensions for the analysis, and 3) suggested three descriptive strategies - Experimentation strategy, Applied strategy and Mimetic strategy - for HEIs to consider in the pursuit of T-shaped professional education. The results show that curricula investigated have a different profile and purpose, and the strategies respond well to this.

Originality/value The contribution of this study is to strive the education of T-shaped professionals for service economy, service business, and service innovation with the contemporary competence needed by future experts, supervisors, and managers. The study promotes and offers valuable information on strategies to develop curricula.

Research limitations The obvious limitation is the single case HEI and three case curricula. As HEIs are slowly on grasping the ideas of interdisciplinary curriculum, there is limited number of curricula to provide a more comprehensive analysis and comparison of strategies chosen.

Practical implications The case curricula journeys show three coherent but different value propositions for T-shaped professional curriculum responding to the domain fundamentals and disciplinary-specific knowledge required in working life. This paper is focused on developing higher education and specifically strategies to use in designing curricula for future T-shaped professionals.

Key words T-shaped professional; competence; strategies; higher education