Innovation in the East Asian automotive industry:
A structured review of what we know and how to use it

Abstract:

How to compete in East Asia and how to compete with East Asia are central questions for automotive managers in recent decades. Generating, managing and transferring innovations are key challenges in this. What can management studies tell us about how to succeed in these areas? We summarize the research results of 196 studies in English, Japanese, Korean, and Chinese from the last 15 years and make three main contributions: First, we focus on innovation in the East Asian automotive industry, arguing that the special industry and country context merit a more detailed discussion. Second, prior studies have talked about Asia mostly through the filter of Western research results. We complement this by including into our review not only SSCI journals, but also a review of reputable peer reviewed journals written in Chinese, Japanese, and Korean, based on country rankings. Third, we use a structured approach to guide our analysis of the research papers, combining a detailed descriptive analysis of research topics and methods with a focused and more qualitative discussion of the research results and a discussion of how these results can be used by practitioners.

Key words: Innovation; automotive industry; Japan; China; Korea; R&D management; supplier management; literature review