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Building Digital Resilience in Times of Disruption: A Multi-Case Study Analysis of Traditional Firms' Response to External Shocks

TREO Talk Paper

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Abstract

In contrast to the digital transformation approach employed during stable market conditions, firms are often required to adopt a more rapid and radical approach to respond effectively to massive external shocks. Massive external shocks, such as the recent COVID-19 crisis, have resulted in a dramatic shift in consumer behavior from traditional to online shopping, highlighting the need for organizations across various sectors to undertake rapid digital transformations to meet these new demands. This study, thus, investigates how traditional firms can achieve digital resilience by rapidly deploying information system (IS) resources to adapt to changes caused by massive external shocks.

We adopt an inductive multiple case study methodology to explore the digital transformation strategies of six traditional firms from various sectors that have succeeded in addressing the COVID-19 crisis. The findings reveal the emergence of two dissimilar groups regarding their identification of potential digital opportunities for mitigating suffering, their access to and utilization of critical resources, their undertaken actions, and their effectiveness in fostering digital resilience.

The study contributes to the literature on digital resilience by providing an inductive, grounded theoretical model that expands upon existing literature; and provides practical guidelines for practitioners seeking to implement successful digital transformations during a crisis.

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