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Understanding Organisational Collaborations with Dependency Network Diagrams

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ABSTRACT

While organisational collaborations are increasingly common they often fail. More effective design of collaborations should be facilitated by improved understanding of the relationships created. It is suggested that while the most commonly used theoretical lens is transaction cost economics it might not be the most appropriate. Resource dependency theory is proposed as an alternative since it allows for consideration of internal as well as external relationships and is focused on improving understanding rather than optimisation. Grounded in the theory, Dependency Network Diagrams (DNDs) is the modelling technique identified as the most appropriate to capture the essence of a collaboration's relationships. A case study of EnergyCo is presented illustrating how DNDs can be used to document relationships and so serve as an effective foundation for facilitating discussion, enhancing understanding, and contributing to the design of effective collaborations.

Keywords

Collaboration, organisational networks, governance, resource dependency theory, dependency network diagrams, shared services