


Supplier involvement in Product Development: a comparative study of Brazilian automotive chains

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Abstract: This paper identifies and compares the PD activities of ten auto suppliers in the context of engine-producing supply chains set up in Brazil. The demand for technological change starts at the engine manufacturers and is then transferred to other parts of their chains. The auto suppliers' PD activities seem to have a strong interrelationship among four aspects: 1) the structural and relational aspects of the chains they belong to (the number of hierarchical tiers, the number and size of companies at each tier and the relationship pattern between companies); 2) the competitive strategies implemented by the engine manufacturers (product diversity and levels of PD capabilities, competences and accumulated knowledge); 3) product-intrinsic issues (technological content, industry segment (metalworking, electronics, polymeric) and strategic relevance to the engine manufacturers); and 4) company-intrinsic issues like size and ownership, considering that large international auto suppliers tend to develop more technologically complex products.

Keywords: Product Development (PD), supply chains, automotive industry

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