The main challenges for manufacturing companies in implementing and utilizing configurators - DTU Orbit (07/10/2019)

The main challenges for manufacturing companies in implementing and utilizing configurators
Companies providing customized products increasingly apply configurators in supporting sales and design activities, thus improving lead-times, quality, cost, benefits perceived by customers, and customer satisfaction. While configurator advantages have been substantially investigated, the challenges of implementing and utilizing configurators have less often been considered. By reviewing relevant literature, the present study first categorizes the main challenges faced by manufacturing companies when implementing and utilizing configurators. Six main categories of challenges are identified: (1) IT-related, (2) product modeling, (3) organizational, (4) resource constraints, (5) product-related, and (6) knowledge acquisition. Second, through a survey, the importance of those categories of challenges is assessed, and the specific challenges within each of those categories are highlighted. Finally, it is investigated whether the importance of the main categories of challenges varies according to a number of potential context variables. The results of the survey, which studies manufacturing companies that use configurators in providing customized products, offer new insights into the importance of these categories of challenges. The findings contribute to the research on manufacturing companies’ utilization of configurators and will raise awareness of the main challenges associated with their implementation and use.

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