

論文の内容の要旨

論文題目 **Studies on Responses of Government Organizations to External Requirements and Expectations—From Organizational Culture and Absorptive Capacity Perspectives**
(政府機関の外的要請や期待への反応に関する研究—組織文化及び吸収能力の観点から)

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1. Background

This dissertation studies the responses of government organizations to external requirements from the perspectives of organizational culture and absorptive capacity. It focuses mainly on two contrasting cases, in which ministries of the government of Japan (GOJ) responded to: (i) the unprecedented challenge of transporting radioactive soil and waste to the Fukushima Interim Storage Facility (ISF) after the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami on 11 March 2011 and (ii) the application of an international good practice, road safety audits (RSA), which almost all major countries but Japan had adopted. This dissertation reviews the key factors that led two GOJ ministries, namely the Ministry of Environment (MOE) and the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism (MLIT), to innovative responses with consideration to their organizational culture and absorptive capacity. Some other cases from each ministry were also examined to provide further observations on their organizational behaviors.

Culture is an important factor in organizational analysis (Smircich, 1983). Culture can be studied as an integral part of the adaptation process of organizations, and specific cultural traits may be useful predictors of performance and effectiveness (Denison & Mishra, 1995). Organizational culture fosters or inhibits innovation. Naranjo-Valencia, Jiménez-Jiménez, and Sanz-Valle (2011) found that organizational culture was a clear determinant of innovation strategy; adhocracy cultures foster innovation, whereas hierarchical cultures promote imitation. Each organization has a different culture, and Chatman and Jehn (1994) found that stable organizational culture dimensions existed across industries and that these culture dimensions varied more across industries than within them. The public sector and transport industry, characterized by long-linked technologies and low growth, were typically found to be detail and stability oriented rather than people and innovation oriented.

The organizational culture of the GOJ is often referred to as “Kasumigaseki culture,” named after the location of the central government headquarters. Nishio (2003) pointed out that Kasumigaseki culture is dominated by egalitarianism and mutuality and, as a result, that the authorities often fail to function and remain indecisive in situations where decisions and actions are needed. This culture has little individualism, where innovative ideas spring out through individual choice and responsibility; rather, it can be characterized by closedness, privileges, sectionalism, centralization-fusion, and mutuality. Shin (2014) compared the administrative cultures in three East Asian countries (Japan, Korea, and China) and concluded that the strong legal sense and order/class consciousness in Japan’s administrative culture were unique. Suzuki (2008) noted that the inefficiency and inflexibility of Kasumigaseki bureaucracy had

developed to minimize organizational risks associated with the potential for the ministry organizations to be headed by incapable ministers (politicians).

Absorptive capacity is the ability of an organization to recognize the value of new, external information and was introduced by Cohen and Levinthal (1990). It is critical to an organization's innovative capabilities and is largely a function of the organization's level of prior related knowledge. Zahra and George (2002) distinguished between an organization's potential and realized capacity and outlined the conditions when the potential and realized capacities can differently influence the creation and sustenance of its competitive advantage. Ishizuka (2005) focused on absorptive capacity through organizational gatekeeping of incoming information and concluded that numerous individuals should be exposed to absorb external information directly, instead of gatekeeping by a small number of individuals. This was observed to be of particular importance in a rapidly changing or highly uncertain environment.

The concepts of absorptive capacity and organizational culture are closely interlinked. Lane and Lubatkin (1998) found that one of the key absorptive capacity factors in inter-organizational learning lies in the level of management formalization. Higher levels of innovativeness in organizational cultures that emphasize learning, development, and participative decision-making are associated with a greater capacity for adaptation or absorptive capacity (Hurley & Hult, 1998). In the information technology industry, Harrington and Guimaraes (2005) found that organizational culture influence absorptive capacity as it relates to the implementation of new technologies.

Despite growing use of the concept, the study of absorptive capacity remains difficult because of the ambiguity and diversity of its definitions, components, antecedents, and outcomes (Zahra & George, 2002). Volberda, Foss, and Lyles (2010) mapped the existing terrain of research in absorptive capacity through a bibliometric analysis. They pointed out that organizational design and individual-level factors had been relatively neglected in the absorptive capacity research and that more research was required to show how such micro- and macro-level factors would influence organizational outcomes such as competitive advantage, innovation, and performance.

Applying the concept of absorptive capacity to the assessment of the performance of public sector organizations has value through theorizing the relationships between organizational performance and knowledge processes and the broader concept of dynamic capabilities (Harvey, Skelcher, Spencer, Jas, & Walshe, 2010). Existing studies in the field of organizational change capacity focus mainly on the private sector and tend to neglect organizations in the public sector. Klärner, Probst, and Soparnot (2008) attempted to fill this gap through their studies on the organizational change capacity of the World Health Organization and found that the organization had been lacking important determinants of its change capacity.

2. Objective

This dissertation reviews factors related to the potential for innovative and flexible responses under the GOJ's unique organizational culture and absorptive capacity through six case studies. The cases are all in the public sector, an area which lacks studies. Building upon these case studies, this dissertation assesses the enabling factors for innovative and flexible responses from the perspectives of organizational culture and absorptive capacity, and provides policy recommendations to GOJ organizations.

3. Methodology

This dissertation reviews mainly two contrasting cases in the transport sector in which the GOJ organizations responded to external requirements and expectations. Other cases in which the MOE and the MLIT responded to external requirements and expectations are also reviewed (Table 1). In all these

situations, the ministries were required or expected to respond innovatively and flexibly to meet new or emerging needs. Organizational culture and absorptive capacity play important roles when organizations need to change their normal ways of business. Such organizational factors are examined through the case studies.

Table 1: Case Studies

	Ministry of the Environment	Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism
Study cases	1. Transport of radioactive soil and waste to the Fukushima Interim Storage Facility	2. Adoption of road safety audits, an international good practice
	3. Formulation of the Basic Environmental Law	4. Formulation of the Innovation Promotion Outline
	5. Establishment of the Carbon Tax and other responses to climate change issues	6. Reforms of national airport management through establishment of the Airport Management Reform Promotion Office

The case studies are based on qualitative analyses of the facts obtained through interviews and dialogues the author conducted with relevant government officials and stakeholders as well as the hands-on experience of the author. The conclusions are derived mostly through abductive reasoning.

4. Structure of Dissertation

This dissertation comprises four chapters. This chapter introduces the research background, objective, methodology, and structure of the dissertation.

Chapter 2 provides an analysis of the MOE through three cases: (i) planning and implementation of the transport of radioactive soil and waste to the Fukushima ISF, (ii) formulation of the Basic Environmental Law, which captured emerging environmental issues and provided various breakthroughs in environmental policy, and (iii) establishment of the Carbon Tax and responses to various climate change issues. The GOJ had assigned the MOE to respond to the unprecedented challenge of transporting radioactive soil and waste to the Fukushima ISF. Despite some concerns about its suitability and capacity, the MOE prepared transport plans and started a pilot transport project in a relatively short period of time. This first MOE case study includes a review of the factors responsible for the successful planning and implementation from the organizational culture and absorptive capacity perspectives.

Chapter 3 provides the analysis of the MLIT through three cases: (i) application of RSA, which is considered to be an international good practice and has been adopted by many developed and developing countries, (ii) formulation of the Innovation Promotion Outline, and (iii) reform of national airports through establishment of the Airport Management Reform Promotion Office. The GOJ promotes RSA through bilateral and multilateral overseas development assistance but has not applied it to domestic road projects. The first MLIT case study reviews a pilot project in Chiba Prefecture and an ensuing nation-wide pilot program from the organizational culture and absorptive capacity perspectives.

Chapter 4 presents the research conclusions and provides policy recommendations.

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