

A Study on Collaboration between Medical Professionals and Japanese Small and Medium –Sized Industrial Enterprises

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This research concerns collaboration between medical professionals and small and medium-Sized industrial enterprises (SMEs). A sociological and management study of this topic has yet to be explored. Against this backdrop, this paper sought to answer the following questions: “What kinds of major problems exist in collaboration between medical professionals and SMEs?” and “How are such relationships created, developed, and executed?” To answer these questions, three propositions were established and examined.

The first proposition was established as follows: “There is a gap in thinking between medical professionals and SMEs.” Based on this proposition, the study tried to identify major problems in terms of gaps in the way these actors think. The results did not in fact substantiate such gaps, but rather strongly indicated a lack of capabilities on the part of the SMEs.

The second proposition was established as follows: “SMEs participating in collaborative efforts have resources that are different from their competitors.” Accordingly, the study searched for management resources of the participating SMEs that are different from those of non-participating SMEs, assuming a set of management resources that are likely to be in place from a resource-based view. The results did not substantiate a difference in management resources between participating and non-participating SMEs, but instead revealed that participating SMEs possessed an entrepreneurial orientation (EO).

Finally, the third proposition was established as follows: “SMEs that succeed in collaborative efforts possess a certain amount of resources.” Based on this, the study searched for a successful model for collaborative efforts. The results suggested the importance of the existence and role of the person in charge as the “boundary personnel”, the development of organizational capabilities leveraged through the person in charge during the collaboration, and a strong ability in the firm to make technical proposals.

Through these investigations, the paper also proposes that, alongside taking bold measures, SMEs must develop a close relationship with medical professionals.