

Pursuit of Opportunity: “Kyoto way” Entrepreneurship

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Introduction

Entrepreneurs are affected by the nation in which they operate and also by the region in which they are situated. How do creators mobilize the structure such as incubation centers in their entrepreneurial project? How effective is this?

The objective of this research is to understand the relationship between the entrepreneurial process and its accompanying structure. Based on the research by Messeghem and Sammut (2006), we focus on two points as follows: (1) the relationship between entrepreneurial opportunity-seeking and the role of accompanying structures; and (2) the relationship between entrepreneurial legitimacy seeking and the role of the structure.

In 1989 Kyoto Research Park (KRP) was established beside the Kyoto High Tech Valley as the first private incubation facility in Japan. Since then, KRP has played an important role to provide start-up entrepreneurs with opportunity and basis in areas like IT, e-commerce, consulting, university related R&D and other high-technology. This empirical study is supported by a historical approach on entrepreneurs in Japan (Dana, 2007).

Our empirical study investigates entrepreneurship at Kyoto Research Park in Japan. The city of Kyoto is internationally known for its history and culture. This ancient capital is also a center of entrepreneurial and technological prowess. “Kyoto way” entrepreneurship gave birth to world-class ventures such as Horiba, Omron, Kyocera, and Nintendo.

Methodology

We adopt the case study methodology of Yin (1994), which can assure the comprehension of a process of social phenomenon as entrepreneurship. We interviewed three directors of the Kyoto Research Park and 10 entrepreneurs who created an enterprise within the Park.

Findings

Three propositions formulated by Messeghem and Sammut (2006) are considered.

- Proposition 1: Accompanying structure influence on the research and development of opportunity of the creator.
- Proposition 2: Project bearers who enter the accompanying structure have already been integrated in the reticular logic; accompanying processes enforce this network approach.
- Proposition 3: Creators (by developing their activities within the accompanying structures) seek to improve the credibility of their project.

Discussion

Our study confirms that findings of Messeghem and Sammut (2006) are applicable in a completely different region, namely Kyoto, Japan:

- (1) Opportunity seeking is a matter of networks.
- (2) Opportunity seeking is a matter of “legitimacy.”
- (3) Risk of entrepreneurs’ isolation.

Theoretical advances of contribution

This study tested propositions advanced by Messeghem and Sammut (2006) with an empirical study on entrepreneurs at Kyoto Research Park.

Literature

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