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Autonomy and Co-creation

- A Study of Innovation through “Ba”

co-created between a Maker and a Customer -

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Keywords: “Ba”, relationship, “ Basho ”, co-creation, autonomous organization, market creation, innovation between two firms, bioholomics, living system, the basho domain of self, self-referential cycle through basho, boundary conditions, principle of ba integration, linkage of ba, generic condition of ba, activated condition of ba.

This research was performed for the purpose of understanding an innovation process through co-created “ Ba (shared context in reflection and action) ” between a maker and a customer. The question was what kind of feature in an autonomous organization lead creation of “Ba” with its customers, and what kind of influence happens in organizations which related to co-creation of the ba.

In Chapter 1, the main purpose of this research and its background were described, and some hypotheses were shown.

In Chapter 2, the theoretical and empirical researches related concepts such as inter-organizations, innovation as knowledge creation, autonomous organization, “Ba” were reviewed. The two key concepts related to four previous concepts were chosen, in order to understanding and arranging the structure of previous researches. The key word “ relationship ” was referred by an inter-organizational relationship theory, a marketing theory, and a study of source of innovation. From there, in spite of having made much theoretical

development in connection of “ relationship ”in organizational studies , the main point of issue was about the ego domain of self in each organizations, and nothing related with the basho domain of self. The two-domain model of self was created in the study of bioholonics, and “ Basho ” is the place where I have lived since its birth and shall live until its death according to Kitaro Nishida, the initiator of the philosophy of “ Basho ” .

The key word “ Ba ” was referred by from “place” theories such as the ancient Greek philosophy of place discussed by Aristotle and Plato, to “field” theories of the modern natural science such as physical science, physical chemistry, biology. Then, as precedence-theoretical research for applying the theory of “place” and “field” to the field of an organizational theory, the theory of “Ba” in bioholonics was examined. From the theory of “Ba” in bioholonics, there introduced some critical concepts such as the basho domain of self, self-referential cycle through basho, “Ba” as a boundary condition, attached self with basho as a fundamental condition of co-creation.

The theoretical framework of “Ba” lead to be understood through the examination of these key concepts. A final goal of this research is uniting of the theory of organizational knowledge creation and "Ba" theory.

In Chapter 3, the case study was executed by a qualitative investigation. The case is about some joint projects between "Mayekawa Mfg. Co., Ltd." and the customers. The case study was started from the consideration of an integrated principle in "Mayekawa Mfg. Co., Ltd.", as regard with the typical model of the autonomous organization. The relation between the mechanism of "Information synthesis" as an integrated principle and "Ba"-making process was clarified from the study.

Next, some evidences were observed that mechanism of "Information synthesis" in an autonomous organization was connected with "Ba"-making process with the customer. The new findings obtained from the case are two of the following.

1. An integrated principle in an autonomous organization is to generate “Ba” as the boundary condition in "Basho". Making the concept of “Ba” and "Basho" theory is indispensable to understand the principle of integration of autonomous organizational system.
2. Co-created “Ba” connects the dynamic organizational knowledge creation movement between organizations. This means that a new output (innovation) is not only created from co-created “Ba” by the connection of the knowledge creation cycle in both organization but also a new output (innovation) created in each organization.

In Chapter 4, the activation condition of “Ba” and the generation condition of “Ba” were presented as precondition of co-creation of “Ba” based on the case. In addition, the meaning

of “Ba” in the dynamic organizational knowledge creation theory was considered.

The hypothesis newly found through this research is following.

1. Hypothesis 1: The co-creation of “Ba” performed by the basho domain of self as the life system. Therefore, it is necessary to build in the principle of the life system the organization so that the organization may become co-creative.
2. Hypothesis 2: Co-creation of “Ba” created in case that the ego domain of self (of an individual or a group) with variety changes the basho domain of self.
3. Hypothesis 3: The activation of co-created “Ba” lead new “Ba” with third parties.

It means co-created “Ba” makes linkage.

To verify these hypotheses, theoretical and empirical studies of "Ba" and "Basho" as well as the ontology of organization are highly required.