

Eco-Friendly Business Practices: Case Studies of Japanese Companies

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環境に優しいビジネスプラクティス：日本企業のケーススタディ

Abstract

Using a cross-section of Japanese companies, this research addresses the impact of eco-friendly business practices throughout company operations. Individual chapters focus on gender attitudes toward environmental protection, consumer response to eco-labels and green marketing, standardization of companies' innovative products and processes, implementation of environmental management systems, evaluation of supply chain and modeling of financial impact.

The Japanese companies selected as case studies include Ajinomoto Group, Kao Corporation and Toyota Motor Corporation. Through interviews with managers at each firm we examine their current business activities and propose various areas where competitive advantages that can be achieved through eco-friendly business practices.

Chapter 1 provides a general overview of the topic and the objectives of the research. It also includes introductory information about the case study companies and the rationale for their selection. We also present existing research related to environmentally-friendly business activities in Japan and describe keywords related to this research.

Chapter 2 focuses on gender differences in consumer attitudes toward environmental protection, green products, environmental corporate image, and the awareness of case study companies green activities. A questionnaire survey was conducted to examine the gender difference in consumer attitudes on “going green”, and to investigate the gender difference in the relationship between consumer attitudes on “going green” and their awareness of case study companies

Chapter 3 studies consumer responses to the marketing of eco-products by using eco-labels. Direct interviews are conducted with managers at case study companies and with consumers.

It is determined that company perception of how consumers feel about eco-products and eco-labels in some cases differs from their actual attitudes.

Chapter 4 identifies eco-products to be standardized by the case study companies are studied regarding their standardization development. The main elements of standards strategy such as basic positioning, enabling strategies, profit maximization and continuing competition are the framework for analysis of eco-products standardization.

Chapter 5 investigates three Japan based firms who have voluntarily adopted ISO 14001, standard for environmental management system (EMS) as a tool for continuous environmental improvements. Their decision to implement this standard is considered from environmental, social, and economic perspectives. Particularly, employees who work with ISO 14001 believe that following its policies can help to improve their performance and overall attitude toward the environment.

Chapter 6, supply chain analysis of the case study companies by the suggested framework showed the benefits companies get by greening their supply chains. Finally, the suggestions for the improvements in lack of initiatives by the case study companies are discussed.

In **Chapter 7**, the profit derived from eco-friendly business activities is studied as a dimension of the company's performance. This analysis is used to a model to engage in environmental activities by considering financial results.

Keywords: competitive advantage, green products, gender attitude, eco-products, eco-labels, green marketing, standardization, ISO 14001, environmental management system, environmental activities, financial results, life cycle assessment, green supply chain management.

概要

日本企業のクロスセクションを対象にし、環境に優しいビジネスプラクティスの影響に関する研究を行う。ジェンダーの環境保護意識への影響・消費者行動・標準化・ISO 14001 環境管理制度・財務上の影響、およびサプライチェーンマネジメントについて、各章において述べていく。

本研究では、味の素グループ、花王株式会社、トヨタ自動車株式会社のケースを挙げる。三社のマネージャーのインタビューに基づき、現在に行われているビジネスの概要を調査した。さらに、環境に優しいビジネスの事業により、どのような競争優位性を生み出すことができるのかを分析した。

まず、第一章では本研究の問題意識と研究目的を明示し、対象となる企業と選択基準を説明する。次に、日本におけるこのテーマについての先行研究と重要なキーワードを紹介する。

次に、第二章では環境保全を始め、グリーン製品、環境企業イメージ、研究対象の企業に対して、消費者はどのように感じているかということに焦点を置く。エコ化することに対する、消費者のジェンダー意識の相違点と対象企業との相関関係を調べるためにアンケートを実施した。

第三章ではアンケートとインタビュー調査により、マーケティングにおけるエコ商品の消費者の反応を分析した。現在、エコ商品・エコラベルに関して、対象企業の問題意識と実際の消費者意識との間にギャップが生じているという結論に至った。

また、第四章では標準化されたエコ商品が標準化されるプロセスを研究した。エコ化するプロセスには、ポジショニング、実践戦略、利益最大化および競争力継続の要素が不可欠であることが示された。

第五章では企業が ISO14001 規格を自主的に導入するのはツールとして活躍してきたことがわかった。環境保全、社会的背景、さらに利益追求の理念に基づいて、どうシステムを導入していることが考えられる。

第六章では、サプライチェーンにおける環境融合の競争優位性を発揮させるベネフィットを調査した。この調査の元に、ライフサイクルアセスメント (LCA) で対象企業ビジネスプロセスを評価した。この LCA フレームワークを参考にし、対象企業のサプライチェーンを研究対象にすることで、エコビジネスイニシアチブを分析した。分析より、アソシエイトベネフィッツカンパニーがグリーンサプライチェーンにおいて成功原因が予想された。さらに、この分析結果を通じてグリーンイニシアチブの反応手法を説明し、これらの分野の改善を提案する。

最後に、第七章では、エコ活動から生まれた利益は、会社の業績から算出される結果を示した。この算出方法に基づき、新たなモデルを作り出し、今後エコ活動から生まれる効果が経営の安静かに寄与すると示唆された。

キーワード：競争優位性、グリーン製品、ジェンダー意識、エコ製品、エコラベル、グリーンマーケティング、標準化、ISO14001、環境マネジメントシステム、エコ活動、業績好調、ライフサイクルアセスメント、グリーンサプライチェーンマネジメント

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