

Three-step analysis
of IRIS OHYAMA's competitive advantage
: From the perspective of Dynamic Capability

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to investigate sources of firm's capability to respond restless changes of external environment. Dynamic Capability derived from Resource-Based View consider internal resources as a source of competitive advantage, but there is much room to discuss its components and processes into the level of corporate action. Therefore, in this research, we analyze IRIS OHYAMA, which seems to have flexible capability to adapt itself to environment because of its adventurous changes of business circumstances and effective investment for diversification, in three views: market strategy, organizational system and forming component of such capability to specify the process to construct and utilize of Dynamic Capability and its component. Through this research, we add new and more practical insights in the discussion of Dynamic Capability.

Key words : IRIS OHYAMA, Dynamic Capability, product differentiation, market strategy , organizational system, organizational culture

Words:

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1. Introduction

“It is not the strongest species that survive, nor the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to change.” (Charles Darwin, 1859)

The environment surrounding firms is always changing. Especially, technological development known as “Industry 4.0” and market change mainly in emerging countries pose various challenges to firm’s activities. It is becoming harder and harder for firms to adapt themselves to these turbulent environmental changes these days. How can firms survive and evolve responding to the restless external changes? In this research, we will focus on the firm’s capability to adapt themselves to external environmental changes through the case study of IRIS OHYAMA.

One of the most representative theories explaining firm’s capability to survive and evolve adapting themselves to such changes is discussion on the source of competitive advantage of firms in strategic management. Porter proposed Positioning-Based View (Porter, 1990) as a conceptual tool to understand the competitive advantage of American firms actively promoting related and unrelated diversification. On the other hand, Barney proposed Resource-Based View(hereinafter referred to as the RBV) (Barney, 1991) based on resources in firm and its strength and weakness under influence of Japanese firms. Dynamic Capability(hereinafter referred to as the DC) was developed from RBV further focusing on the capability of firms to adapt themselves to changing environment (Teece, Pisano and Shuen, 1997). This concept added dynamic view on RBV and known as one of the studies to understand comparative advantage of firms. However, the paper of Teece et al. (1997 : 509~533) advocating this concept and the researches by Eisenhardt et al. (2000: 997~1010) and Zollo et al, (2002: 339~351) developing this theory have been criticized because this theory is not specific and

difficult to understand how DC is constructed and utilized. Other researches derived from these papers haven't solved this problem. Accordingly, we aim to understand and supplement this concept by specifying it through in-depth case study of IRIS OHYAMA.

IRIS OHYAMA, the firm we study in this research, has very interesting capability to adopt itself to environment. IRIS OHYAMA made continuous growth since established as OHYAMA Blow works in 1958. In spite of burst of bubble economy in 1991 and the financial crisis in 2008, it has steadily increased its sales for 43 successive quarters. In the beginning, it grew by plastic forming technology, which is its core technology. In addition, it established its own business model: Maker-Vender (Integration of manufacturer and wholesaler). Wholesale firms didn't value IRIS OHYAMA's production because it was a very small firm at first, so they began to vend its production directly to home centers, also ignored from wholesale firms. Furthermore, IRIS OHYAMA entered home appliances market, considered as a saturated market in 2009 and has shown excellent performance in terms of sales. In addition, it is actively expanding its business into the overseas markets. In China, bearing in mind that the immature distribution environment, it started retailing which is not done in Japan. Such brilliant performance of IRIS OHYAMA called attention by many media and became a hot topic, but what has been explained about it was just snapshot of the firm.

We investigated IRIS OHYAMA in several steps by multimethod analysis. At first, we collected secondary resources like articles and books about IRIS OHYAMA. Then, we analyzed home appliances and LED market, which contribute to rapid growth of IRIS OHYAMA in this decade by making value graphs from secondary resources available from Internet and resources made by third organizations. As a final step, we interviewed to employees in IRIS OHYAMA to further investigate the components

which realized such capability and growth. We pay full attention about the reliability and credibility of each dataset at every step.

Through this research, what we discovered can be summarized as below. Firstly, according to the result of product comparison with other competing firms, we discovered that IRIS OHYAMA is taking outstanding differentiation strategy. Secondly, to take this strategy, IRIS OHYAMA has unique organizational system, its forming process and permeated corporate culture. In addition, these discoveries supplement the process how DC is constructed and utilized.

In the following section, we clarify how DC emerge, construct and develop through literature review and present the gap in discuss about construction and utilization of DC. In chapter 3, we explain the appropriateness to select IRIS OHYAMA a case study to deeply understand firm's capability to adapt themselves to environment. Also, we will explain the process and purpose of three steps of analysis. In chapter 4, we explain the methodology of each step in detail and analyzed results. We also discuss and consider IRIS OHYAMA 's differentiation in 4-1 and the organizational capability which make such strategy possible. Finally, in chapter 5, we will discuss about firm's capability to adapt themselves to environment discovered through the case of IRIS OHYAMA and how the case can supplement DC.

2. Literature review

2-1. Emergence of Dynamic Capability

In the management strategy theory, there are two perspectives in analyzing the source of competitive advantage. It is an analysis focusing on external strategies and internal

resources. Structural analysis of industry by Porter, focuses on opportunities and threats in the competitive environment the company faces. While there is such external analysis of the organization, RBV is an analysis focusing on internal resources. Research that developed based on RBV has arguments over core capability represented by Prahalad and Hamel (1990: 79~91). They suggested the importance of core competence, which is a firm's unique ability to create products and services with high imitability. Core competence brings the competitive advantage for a certain period, however, according to Leonard-Barton (1992: 111~125), it is pointed out that as core competence is effective, organizational inertia works stronger and produces core rigidity that can lose environmental adaptability. To innovate this situation Teece created and implemented DC concepts to explain why some company can make build competitive advantage in rapidly changing environments (Fukazawa, 2015).

2-2. Construction of Dynamic Capability

In order to find out why utilization and construction process of DC have not been elucidated empirically, we will examine major initial papers which are positioned as the origin of DC theory. Each definition is shown in Figure 2-1 below. Specific subjects to be examined are Teece DJ's research (Teece et al. 1997; Teece DJ, 2007) called the proponent of the DC theory, Eisenhardt and Martin's study (Eisenhardt et al, 2000), and Zollo and Winter (Zollo and Winter, 2002). Teece pointed out that there are three important elements: Process · Path · Position to achieve sustainable competitive advantage by constructing and utilization DC. According to Teece et al. (1997: 509~533), Process refers to management process or organization process. According to Teece et al. (1997: 509~533), Process is a management process or organization process. Specifically, it relates to the way in which business is performed within the enterprise,

current practices, learning routines and patterns. Next, Path includes the three roles of coordination and integration, learning, rearrangement and conversion, to the enterprise and the content of Position. In addition, Position also includes whether there are assets and institutions available to the organization and whether they exist inside or outside the organization. It is concerned with possible strategic options for enterprises, presence or absence of incremental profits, and accompanying route dependency. That is, the essence of DC lies in the organization process. And suggested that the organization process is formed by the organization's Position and Path. And Eisenhardt and Martin (2000: 997~1010) developed the research of Teece et al. (1997: 509~533) and made the following three arguments. First, there is a claim that DC has equifinality, homogeneity, and substitutability among companies more than the traditional RBV indicates. It is because there is a common part between companies in the DC of the company that is environmentally compatible. Secondly, it is argued that the effective pattern of DC will change according to the speed of market change. Third, it is argued that the evolution of DC is guided by a learning mechanism. Based on Teece et al. (1997: 509~533) and Eisenhardt and Martin (2000: 997~1010), Zollo and Winter (2002: 339~351) also conceptually verified the DC as being generated and evolved by the learning mechanism. Here, it is characterized by dealing with aspects that create DC itself that is not found in conventional research. Later research has been developed based on these concepts. However, as far as the research has not been discussed on the specific DC components and processes of the enterprise, later DC research has been more practical and what is the components and utilization processes of the DC.

2-3. Development and problem of Dynamic Capability

In summary of the three DC studies mentioned above, it turns out that the DC research includes the following five concepts. ① Response to environmental change, ② Organizational process and routine, ③ Resource restructuring, ④ Role as manager, ⑤ Learning mechanism (Fukuzawa, 2015). Later research has been developed based on these concepts. However, as far as the research has not been discussed on the specific DC components and processes of the enterprise, later DC research has been more practical and what is the components and processes of the DC. In the following we will observe the development of the DC theory from Helfat et al. (2007) which comprehensively integrated DC theory. Helfat et al. (2007) aims to integrate the discussion of researchers representing RBV and DC theory and to become a foothold for later demonstration and theoretical research. And in this research we defined DC as "ability to intentionally create, extend, and modify resources of organization". According to this definition, DC encompasses patterns and conventions, DC is completely distinct from operational capability.

At the same time Teece (2007: 1319~1350) divided the DC into the following three capabilities for empirical analysis: ① Sensing: ability to sense opportunities / threats ② Seizing: capability to capture opportunities, ③ Reconfiguration: The ability to improve competitiveness by improving, combining and protecting tangible and intangible assets of companies, and reconfiguring when necessary.

Following the development of the above concept research, the DC was derived and developed into three categories: (1) DC related literature review, (2) empirical verification of the DC concept, and (3) focused on how DC is constructed and demonstrated (Barreto, 2009). However, the concept of DC has been discussed from each viewpoint by each researcher and there is still no unified view. In particular,

there are many unexplained parts about the specific contents of DC, processes and utilization entities (Wang and Ahmed, 2007; Schreyogg and Kliesch-Eberl, 2007; Ambrosini and Bowman, 2009).

In the research of Koh (2011: 47~62), Fukuzawa (2012: 29~37), and Wada (2013: 371~396), focused on such problems and conducted a case study to clarify DC utilization and construction processes. According to Wada (2013: 371~396), "The entity possessing and exercising DC shares the" unchanged, changing "vision and organizational culture throughout the organization". Although it clarified the specific source for DC construction and utilization, it does not clarify the part of how the company exercises DC construction from the chain structure and achieve the competitive advantage. Based on the research background as described above, we will clarify the construction and utilization process of DC using IRIS OHYAMA which is thought to possess environmental adaptability from various cases.

<Table 1> Definition of DC by each author

	Definition
Teece et al.(1997)	The firm's ability to integrate, build and reconfigure internal and external competences to address rapidly changing environments.
Eisenhardt and Martin (2000)	Dynamic capabilities thus are the organizational and strategic routines by which firms achieve new resource configuration as markets emerge, collide, split, evolve, and die.
Zollo and Winter (2002)	Dynamic capability is a learned and stable pattern of collective activity, and using Dynamic capability, companies can systematically create and modify operating routines to improve effectiveness.
Helfat et al. (2007)	The capacity of an organization to purposefully create, extend, or modify its resource base.
Teece (2007)	Dynamic capabilities can be disaggregated into the capacity (a) to sense and shape opportunities and threats, (b) to seize opportunities, and (c) to maintain competitiveness through enhancing, combining, protecting, and, when necessary, reconfiguring the business enterprise's intangible and tangible assets.

(Source: authors from Eisenhardt and Martin, 2000: Helfat, Finkelstein, Mitchell, Peteraf, Singh, Teece, and Winter, 2007: Teece, Pisano, and Shuen, 1997: Teece, 2007:Zollo and Winter, 2002).

3. Subject of Research / Procedure

3-1. Outline of Selected Company and Analysis Validity

In this paper, we research a company which has capability to adapt itself to environment to clarify utilization and construction process of DC and specify organizational system which utilizes DC and competitive strategy process.

In this paper, IRIS OHYAMA Co., Ltd., is selected as a research subject.

The reason for selecting the case of IRIS OHYAMA in this research is that IRIS OHYAMA is a company that is extremely excellent in capability to adapt itself to environment. In the following, after outlining the IRIS OHYAMA Co., Ltd. , we explain why we determine IRIS OHYAMA has excellent capability to adapt itself to environment(<https://www.irisohyama.co.jp>).IRIS OHYAMA Co., Ltd. used to be the OHYAMA Blowing Industrial Company which was established in Osaka in 1958 by the predecessor, Oyama Morisue. In 1991, they changed their company name to current IRIS OHYAMA Co., Ltd. (hereinafter referred to as IRIS OHYAMA) after conversion into a company in 1971 and relocation of headquarters to Sendai in 1989.

After undergoing subcontract factory, they became independent as a manufacturer with self-developed plastic buoys. Subsequently, by manufacturing plastics with existing products in various fields such as daily necessities, pet products and gardening products, they have grown using plastics technology as the core. After that, they entered to the home appliances · LED market. Figure 1 shows IRIS OHYAMA 's sales from 1980 to 2016 and Figure 2 shows the major products sales ratios of 2008 and 2016.

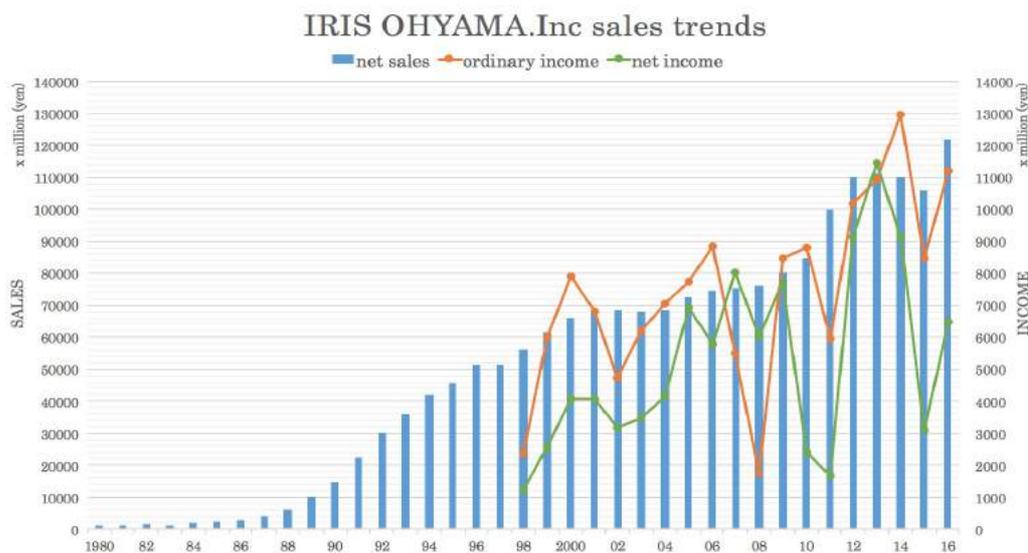
From Figure 1, it can be seen that IRIS OHYAMA continued to increase sales from 1980 to 2016. In addition, from Figure 2, it can be seen that IRIS OHYAMA has greatly

changed its product portfolio from 2008 to 2016.

From the two figures, it can be seen that IRIS OHYAMA is growing continuously by appropriately responding to changes in the external environment and developing its business dynamically. From this fact, we determine that IRIS OHYAMA is a company with excellent environmental adaptability. In addition, the headquarters of IRIS OHYAMA is located in Sendai City and Kakuda I.T.P in Kakuda City, Miyagi Prefecture, which is for R&D and manufacturing facilities, is close to Sendai City. We also think that the geographical aspect of this company is extremely useful in securing rich information that is important in qualitative research. Based on the above reasons, this case is considered to be appropriate as a case to be used for development of DC theory.

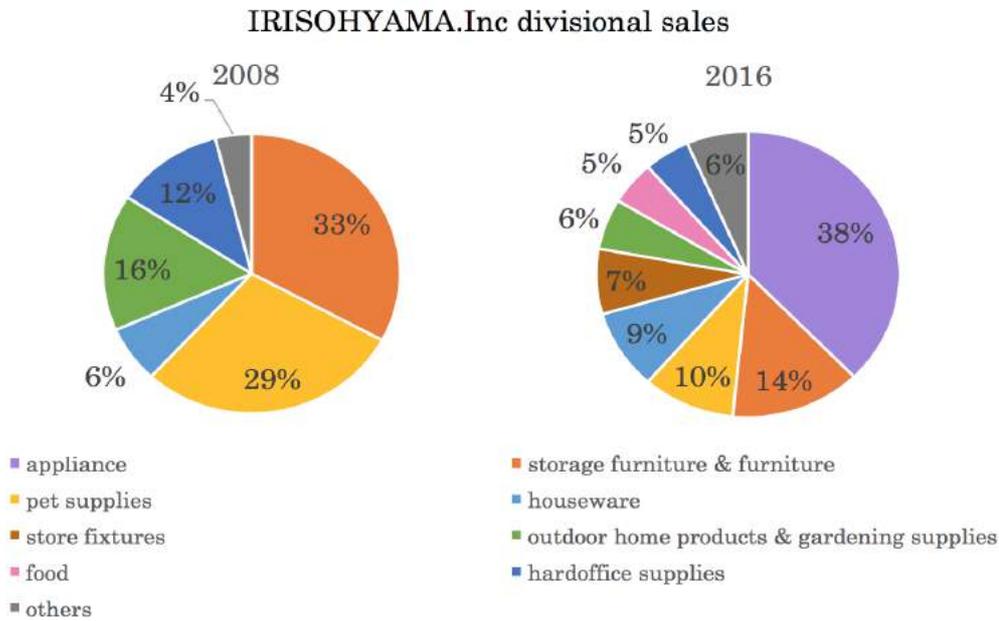
By conducting empirical research using this case, it is possible to supplement the concrete process in which DC is constructed and utilized against DC theory.

<Figure 1> Sales Trend of IRIS OHYAMA



(Source: authors, based on the interview)

<Figure 2> Products Sales Ratio of IRIS OHYAMA



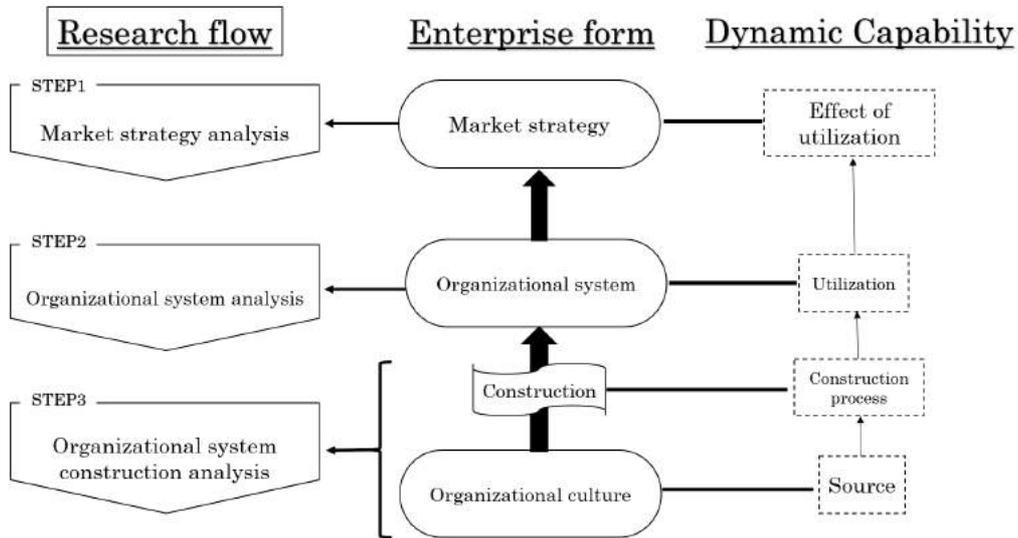
(Source: authors, based on the interview)

3-2. Research procedure

In this research, in order to clarify the company's environmental adaptability in a chain, we adopt the approach called multimethod analysis. Specifically, we follow the three steps shown in figure 3 below.

First of all, in STEP 1, we analyze the market strategy of IRIS OHYAMA from comparison with competitors. Here, it has implications such as measuring the result of DC utilization. Next, in STEP 2, we examine the components of organizational system that makes possible the result in order to deepen the understanding of organizational system which utilizes DC. In STEP 3, we clarify the components and process leading to the establishment of the organizational system, and increase the concreteness level of construction process of DC and the components. Details of each method, reasons for adoption, and validity are described in detail at each stage.

<Figure 3> Analysis procedure



(Source: authors)

4. Case Study

4-1. Market strategy analysis (STEP 1)

In this section, we quantitatively measure the effect of utilized DC through analyzing IRIS OHYAMA `s market strategy. We researched the differences in market strategies between IRIS OHYAMA and other companies by comparing the products, especially appliance and LED lighting. It is appropriate to narrow down analyzing targets to these products, due to the fact that the recent rapid growth of IRIS OHYAMA in sales is largely attributed to the growth in the businesses of appliance and LED lighting which started in 2009

<https://newspicks.com/news/1790075/>, www.itmedia.co.jp).

4-1-1. Market strategy hypothesis

In order to construct a hypothesis, we describe the characteristics of market strategy of IRIS OHYAMA, found in secondary documents (Internet and books). According to them, IRIS OHYAMA takes differentiation strategy based on customer's perspective and cost leadership strategy which Maker-Vender enables, to realize the concept of “*naruhodo kaden*” (products with high added value for customers) (Ohyama Kentaro, 2010).

Based on this fact, we made a hypothesis that it actually takes differentiation strategy and cost leadership strategy to maximize the customer value by providing products of which functions beyond price. To demonstrate the hypothesis, we have quantitatively analyzed each product feature, by comparing all the data of products.

4-1-2. Demonstration methodology

In this section, we explain the methodology of demonstrating the hypothesis mentioned in previous section in 3 steps.

Firstly, we made "value graph" in reference to value map, whose horizontal axis corresponds to relative function and vertical axis corresponds to relative price to clarify level of product's price and function of all companies. (The detailed procedures to make “value map” are explained in accompanying materials)

Secondly, we calculated "relative price per relative function” to demonstrate that IRIS OHYAMA provides low-price products, taking cost leadership strategy.

Finally, we calculated “relative price per relative function” to demonstrate that IRIS

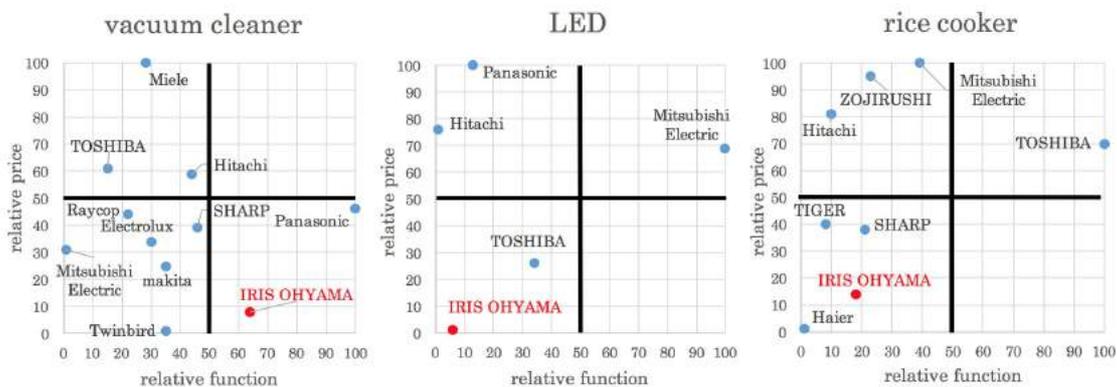
OHYAMA provides high added value products, taking differentiation strategy.

Following the steps described above, we verify our hypothesis in next section.

4-1-3. Analysis results

From value graph (Figure 4), relative prices of IRIS OHYAMA 's vacuum cleaner, LED, and rice cooker are extremely low. In addition, its relative function (customer's satisfaction) of vacuum cleaner is higher than other companies, while that of LED is comparatively not high, the same as Hitachi and Panasonic, and rice cooker is also not high, the same as SHARP and ZOJIRUSHI.

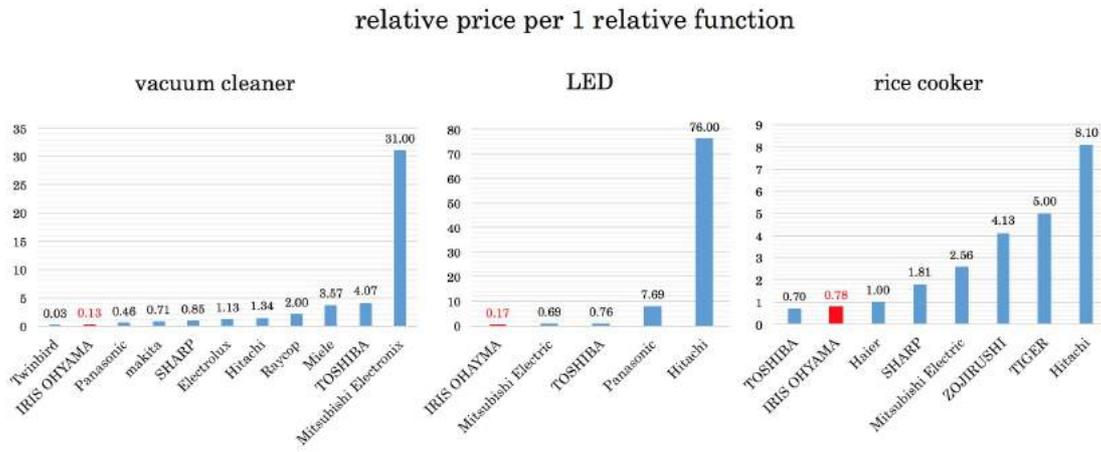
<Figure 4>Value graphs of three products



(Source: authors)

The graph below (Figure 5) illustrates that relative prices of IRISOHYAMA's vacuum cleaner and rice cooker are the second lowest, and that of LED is the lowest. These facts mean that IRIS OHYAMA) is taking cost leadership strategy.

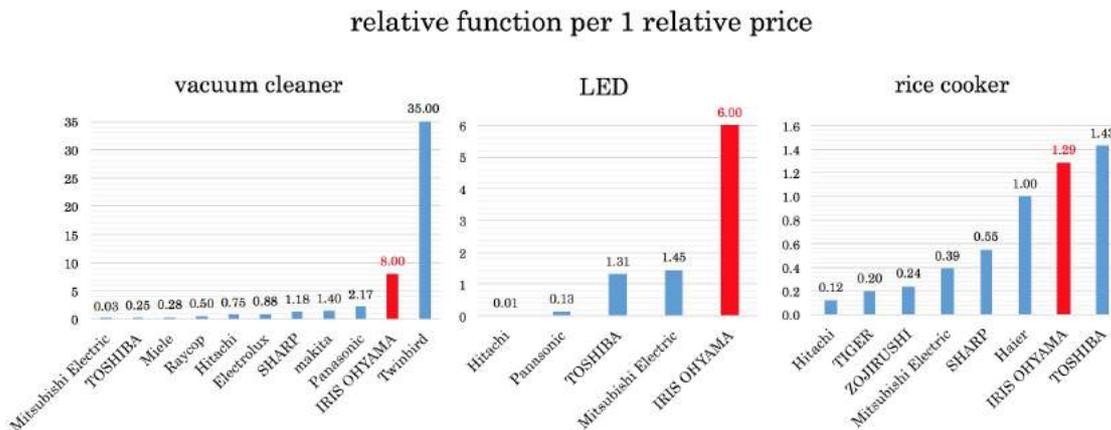
<Figure 5> relative price per 1 relative function of three products



(Source: authors)

The graph below (Figure 6) shows that relative functions of IRIS OHYAMA's vacuum cleaner and rice cooker are the second highest, and that of LED is the highest. These facts mean that IRIS OHYAMA is taking differentiation strategy.

<Figure 6> relative function per 1 relative price of three products



(Source: authors)

From the evidences above, it can be said that IRIS OHYAMA takes cost readership strategy and differentiation strategy, it means our hypothesis is correct. We analyze

IRIS OHYAMA's organizational system which make it possible to take this market strategy in next chapter.

4-2. Organization system analysis (STEP 2)

In this section, by using analysis framework of Kawai (2012: 205~215), we clarify what type of organizational system the IRIS OHYAMA's market strategy becomes possible. This makes it possible to identify factors in the organizational system that enables the IRIS OHYAMA's market strategy and clarify the interaction of the factors.

4-2-1. Analysis method

In order to analyze the organizational system of IRIS OHYAMA, we conduct the analysis of secondary sources and use the analysis framework quoted from Kawai (2012: 205~215) (Ohyama et al, 1996: <https://www.irisohyama.co.jp>). The basis for using this framework for this research is shown below. Based on UNIQLO's success stories, Kawai (2012: 205~215) organized specific component within the organizational system and clarified the relationship between strategy and the component. In addition, since the framework was created by using framework of management strategy, Kawai argues that it has versatility.

Therefore, using this framework is reasonable to analyze the relationship between IRIS OHYAMA's market strategy and component in the organizational system. We explain the analysis framework below.

In this framework, we can see the causal relationship between "market strategy", "product strategy", and "functional strategy", and the causal relationship between "resource(stock)" and "capability", "resource (flow)".

Here, since internal resource are clearly distinguished between resource (stock) and capability, we use the definition of resource and capability of the paper of Grant (1991: 114~135) which argues capability-based approach.(2007;Konno,4~5)

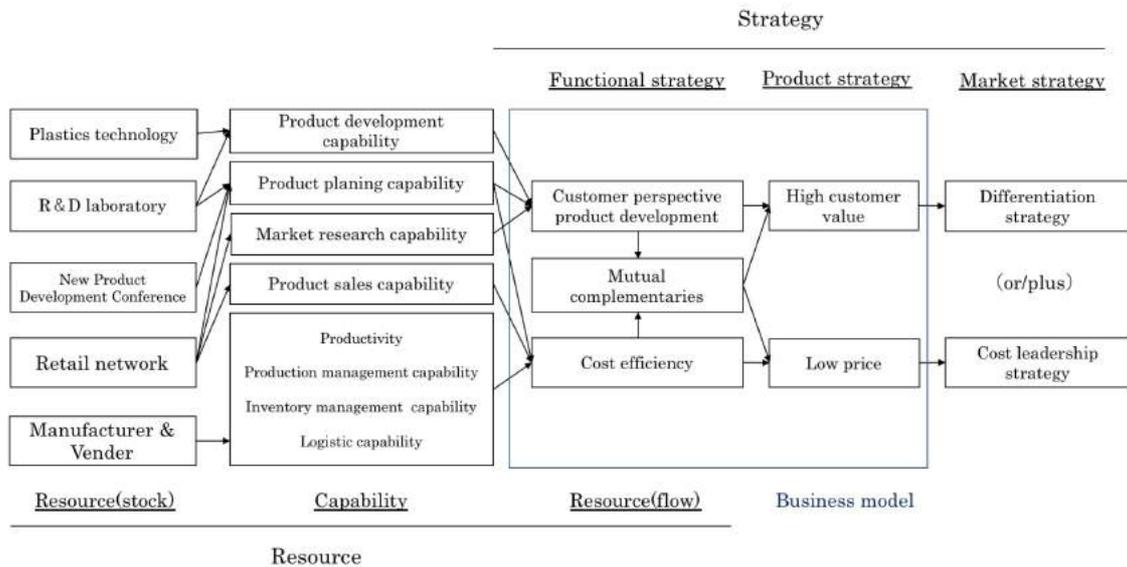
According to him, resource is "the foundation of capability, specifically referred to efficient factory, excellent process technology, brand reputation, patent technology, service and network etc". In addition, capability is "a source of competitive advantage of a firm, so to speak, to combine a series of management resources and utilize the combination.

In this framework, it was difficult to quantitatively identify the component in the organizational system due to limitations of resource-based approach and capacity-based approach, and therefore, by organizing secondary sources based on the above definition, we list IRIS OHYAMA's components which seem to be appropriate.

4-2-2. Result of analysis

Below, a figure showing the organizational system of IRIS OHYAMA is created by applying the above framework. Here, we analyze components that enable market strategy and their casual relationship.

<Figure 7> IRIS OHYAMA's organization system



(Source: authors, based on Kawai, 2012)

IRIS OHYAMA's market strategy, differentiation strategy and cost leadership strategy are realized by high customer value and low price, respectively. They are supported by customer perspective product development and cost efficiency, and are made possible by the combined actions of various resources and capabilities. Resources include plastic technology, R&D laboratory, new product development conference, retail network, Maker-vender, etc. Based on the result of the analysis, we show as follows the process that resource and capability are utilized and the market strategies are employed.

1. Based on the above five resources, the capabilities such as product development capability, product planning capability, market research capability, product sales capability, productivity, production management capability, inventory management capability and logistics capability are combined and exerted.

2.Product development capability, product planning capability and market research capability make possible customer perspective product development as functional strategy. Product sales capability, productivity, production management capability, inventory management capability and logistics capability as resources (flow) make possible cost efficiency.

3.Cost efficiency and customer perspective product development have mutual complementarities, which make possible both high customer value and low price as product strategy, respectively.

4.The above process realizes differentiation strategy and cost leadership strategy as market strategy.

From the analysis result, it can be seen that Maker-Vender has high complexity of the actions on the capability. Therefore, in particular, it is possible to utilize various capabilities and it seems that it is greatly acting as a component for taking market strategies. In addition, Maker-Vender integrates manufacturing and wholesale businesses and has no transactions with wholesalers. So, direct transactions with retailers, arisen from that, make it possible to build a strong network with retail stores. A lot of competitors have dealings with wholesalers and have established long-term relationships. For this reason, it is considered that cutting off relationships with wholesalers is not easy from the viewpoint of association between firms. Therefore, for competitors, it is considered to be highly difficult to imitate. From the above, five resources can be considered as components for taking the market strategy, but Maker-Vender that demonstrates diverse capabilities and high inimitability can be considered to be a particularly important component for achieving competitive advantage.

From these result of analysis, we can see that development of the above five resources and combined actions of various components realize a high customer value / low price product strategy, a differentiation strategy and a cost leadership strategy. In other words, the current competitive advantage of IRIS OHYAMA is realized by the combined actions of various components of the organizational system. In the next section, we will clarify how the organizational system of IRIS OHYAMA is formed and what it will be possible.

4-3. Organization system formation factor analysis (STEP 3)

In this section, IRIS OHYAMA's organizational system formation process is analyzed using the framework of DC construction and utilization process analysis.

In addition, since corporate culture drive construction and utilization of DC (Nonaka and Endo, 2011) (Fujimoto, 1997), we clarify IRIS OHYAMA's corporate culture and its influence on organizational system formation process.

4-3-1. Analysis method

We analyze the formation process of IRIS OHYAMA's organizational system by drawing figures. They are created by organizing secondary sources and information by interview and applying analysis framework.

We use "Analysis Framework Presentation (Flow of DC)" (Nakazima, 2012, 36~37) as a framework for analyzing formation process. This framework explains the flow of DC construction and utilization by using three capabilities of DC (sensing, sheathing, re-configuration) (Nelson and Winter, 1982: Winter, 1987: Teece et al., 1997: Teece, 2007).

"DC is utilized in a series of flows, sensing changes in the external environment

(sensing), capturing opportunities (seating), acquiring, combining and reforming corporate assets (re-configuration), to improve competitiveness." (Nakazima, 2013).

IRIS OHYAMA is thought to have a high environmental adaptive capability as it can be seen from the dynamic business development to LED & home appliance markets from 2009. Therefore, it is reasonable to analyze IRIS OHYAMA using this framework.

First, I will explain the framework.

- ① Changes in the external environment occur.
- ② Top management perceives them.
- ③ He judges how to respond and make decisions.
- ④ He tries to rebuild resources and organizations based on that decision.
- ⑤ Employee carries out both routine work before environmental adaptation and routine work suitable for new environment.
- ⑥ Company Introduces a new routine, learns by trial and error, combines with existing routines to create new operational capabilities.
- ⑦ Through routines at the site, companies will accumulate tangible and intangible resources, improve their quality and abilities, gain resources, combine and rebuild resources, leading to improved competitiveness.
- ⑧ Company adapts again to the environment.

(Nakazima, 2012)

Table 2 is the interviewee information. The interview was held twice. For the first time, we conducted for Mr. Nobuo Tanaka, executive manager of Dalian IRIS CHINA. Since he was involved in the launch of IRIS CHINA's EC advancement, we succeeded in obtaining information that cannot be obtained from existing secondary materials in overseas expansion. As an interview content, we asked about the intention and

circumstances IRIS OHYAMA launched in China, the situation at the time of China expansion, corporate culture. He had a comprehensive perspective on IRIS OHYAMA and he had a detailed grasp of the story of the change of organization. The interview was advanced on the theme of IRIS OYAMA's corporate climate and corporate transformation.

<Table 2> Interviewee information

Day	Name	Sex	Rank	Career	How and Place	Time	Content
2017/06/14	Tanaka Nobuo	Male	Executive Manager, IRIS CHINA.Inc	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department of EC, IRIS PLAZA, IRIS CHINA.Inc 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TV Conference At the head office in Sendai, Miyagi 	1h 55m	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development in China Corporate culture
2017/10/16	Kurashige Motokazu	Male	Executive Manager, Personnel Department, IRIS OHYAMA.Inc	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Joined in mid-career in 1991 Department of Marketing, Sales Promotion, President's Secretary, System, Publicist, Personnel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Face-to-face interview At Kakuda I.T.P. in Kakuda, Miyagi 	2h 30m	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Corporate culture History of company Financial data

(Source: authors)

4-3-2. Case analysis

Of the five resources revealed in 4-2, we focused on the two resources that were formed as a result of IRIS OHYAMA utilizing its environmental adaptability. The first one is a case where they utilized their environmental adaptability in response to developing homeware store market industry (Starting gardening product business, Establishment of Maker-Vender). Secondly, it is a case where they utilized it on the stagnation of plastic products market (Entering appliance industry, Establishment of Osaka R&D laboratory). Thirdly, it is a case where they utilized it in China (Accompanying materials).

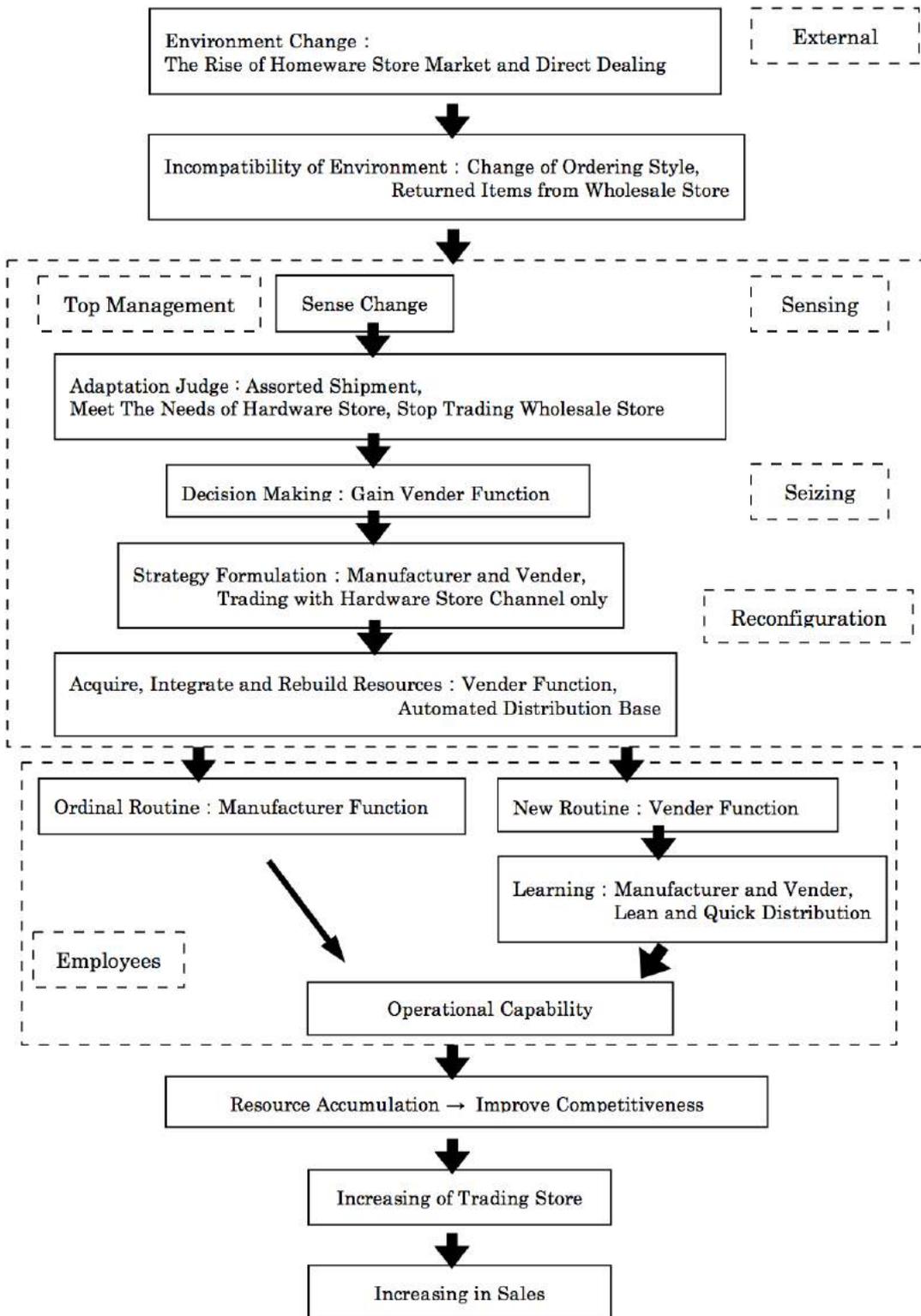
(1)Environmental Adaptability: In case of developing homeware store market industry
(Starting Gardening product business, Establishment of Maker-Vender system)

IRIS OHYAMA became de-subcontractor and it is a micro-firm under a wholesale store's system when homeware store market rises.

A wholesale store did not deal in IRIS OHYAMA's customer perspective products because it is different from other company's existing products. On the other hand, homeware stores were interested in its products. This company directly started dealing with homeware store. But there was a problem which is a change of ordering style. It was able to ship by "the case unit" with wholesale Store. But this company had to ship by 1 item unit because homeware store ordered by 1 item unit after selling. In addition, the number of requests from homeware store increased as soon as the number of order increased such as ship after adding a price. Also, this company had to return stocks in the wholesaler because It was accused of removing commercial wholesalers by direct transactions against commercial morality. Mr, Ohyama(who is president of IRIS OYAMA) decided to take on the vendor function, "I will take vendor function at own company", he said. A vendor function was established. As this company continue this system, demands from home centers had increased more and more. By continuing to make products directly from customers' viewpoints and selling them directly to meet the needs of homeware store, the number of dealing stores and the sale amount have continued to increase. (reference: IRIS Story ,<https://www.irisohyama.co.jp>)

In this way, this company acquired the vendor function. Furthermore, it seems that Mr,Ohyamaf's attitude and posture, "try it", influenced it.

<Figure 8>Environmental adaptive capability (Maker-Vender)



(Source: authors, based on Nakazima, 2012)

(2) Environmental adaptability in response to stagnation of plastic products market.

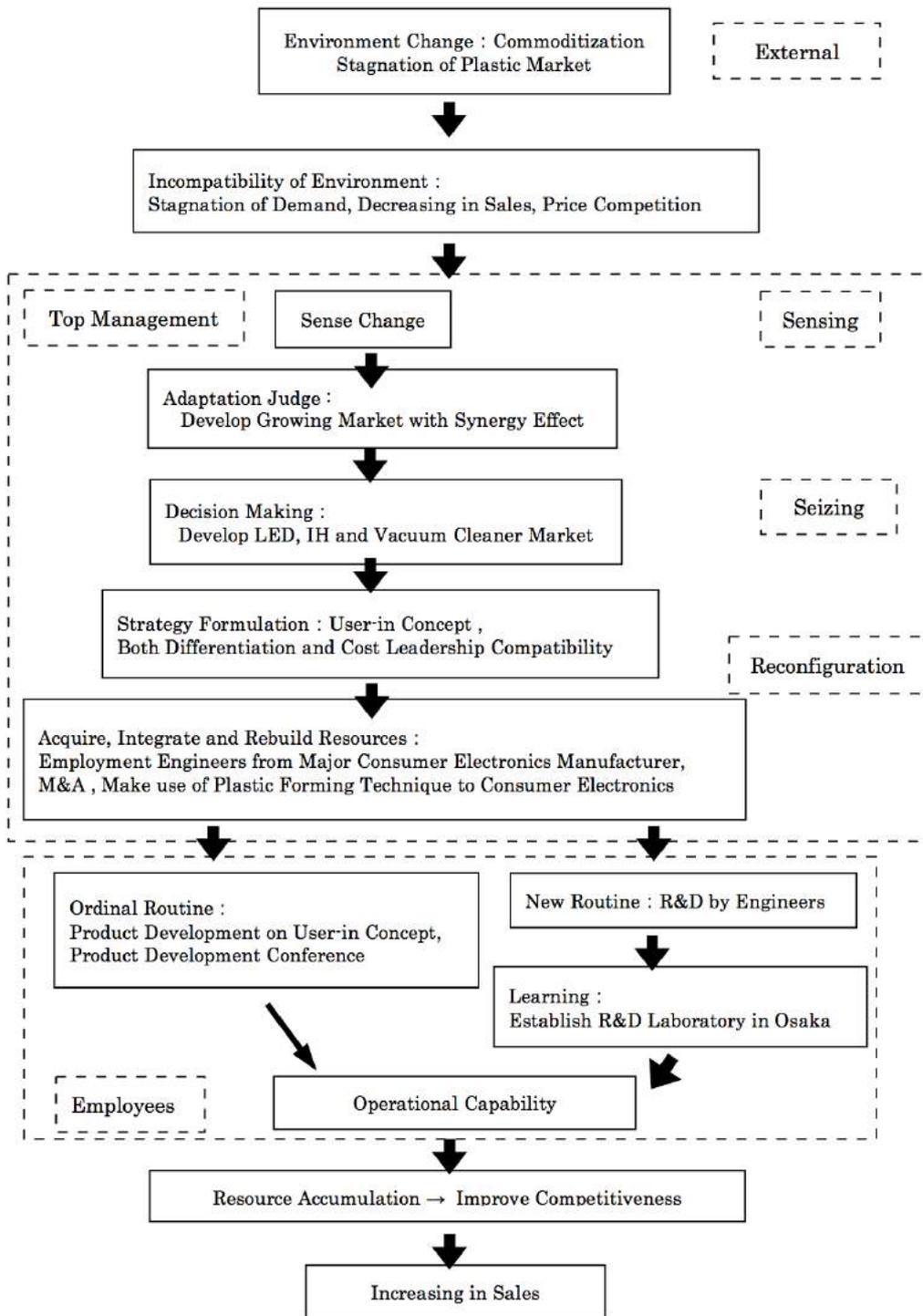
(Starting Appliance business, Establishment of R&D laboratory in Osaka)

Sales of the Garden, Pet and Homeware business which were the main business of IRIS OHYAMA were sluggish in 2009. In the background for this, the stagnation of the plastic-product-market and homogenization into our products by other companies were progressing.

In response to this environmental change, IRIS OHYAMA suffered from stagnant demand, decreased sales, and intense price competition. Therefore, they consider entry into new market where they can make use of existing management resources. And they have decided to challenge starting appliance business. Mr. Kurashige said "Owing to Ohyama's proposal that "he would do it", employees also felt like doing it." and looked back on those days. At that time, some large companies have occupied most of the appliance market share. So, it was considered difficult for IRIS OHYAMA to enter it. But when they research its characteristic, they noticed that their plastic molding technology could be useful and there was no product which the user really wanted in the market. They thought that it was possible to succeed in it. In fact, we have entered the LED market with weapons of high customer value function by customer perspective product development and low price by cost efficiency. Also, IRIS OHYAMA positively has adopted mid-career engineers in response to the poor performance of major appliance manufacturers and the frequent reduction of personnel accompanying it. They acquired the resource by acquiring the LED business of ROHM CO., LTD. Furthermore, we have integrated and reconstructed resources to apply existing plastic molding technology to appliances. Their sales have increased after entering the LED market. While seeking the next entry market of an appliance, they needed high technology and founded R&D laboratory in Osaka.

Therefore owing to their intent, try it, they adapted to the environment change and established the R&D laboratory.

<Figure 9> Environmental adaptive capability of IRIS OHYAMA
(home appliance entry)



(Source: authors, based on Nakazima, 2012)

Based on the above two case analysis, we could reveal the emergent process of IRIS OHYAMA, undergoing changes in the external environment, making decisions and strategies corresponding to them, acquiring, integrating and rebuilding resources according to the strategy, improving competitiveness and reconforming.

From the above, it seems that there is a stance that the Mr, Ohyama and other staffs tried first as a factor to promote this process. In addition, this interview revealed that this attitude is common to all corporate activities, not limited to the above two cases.

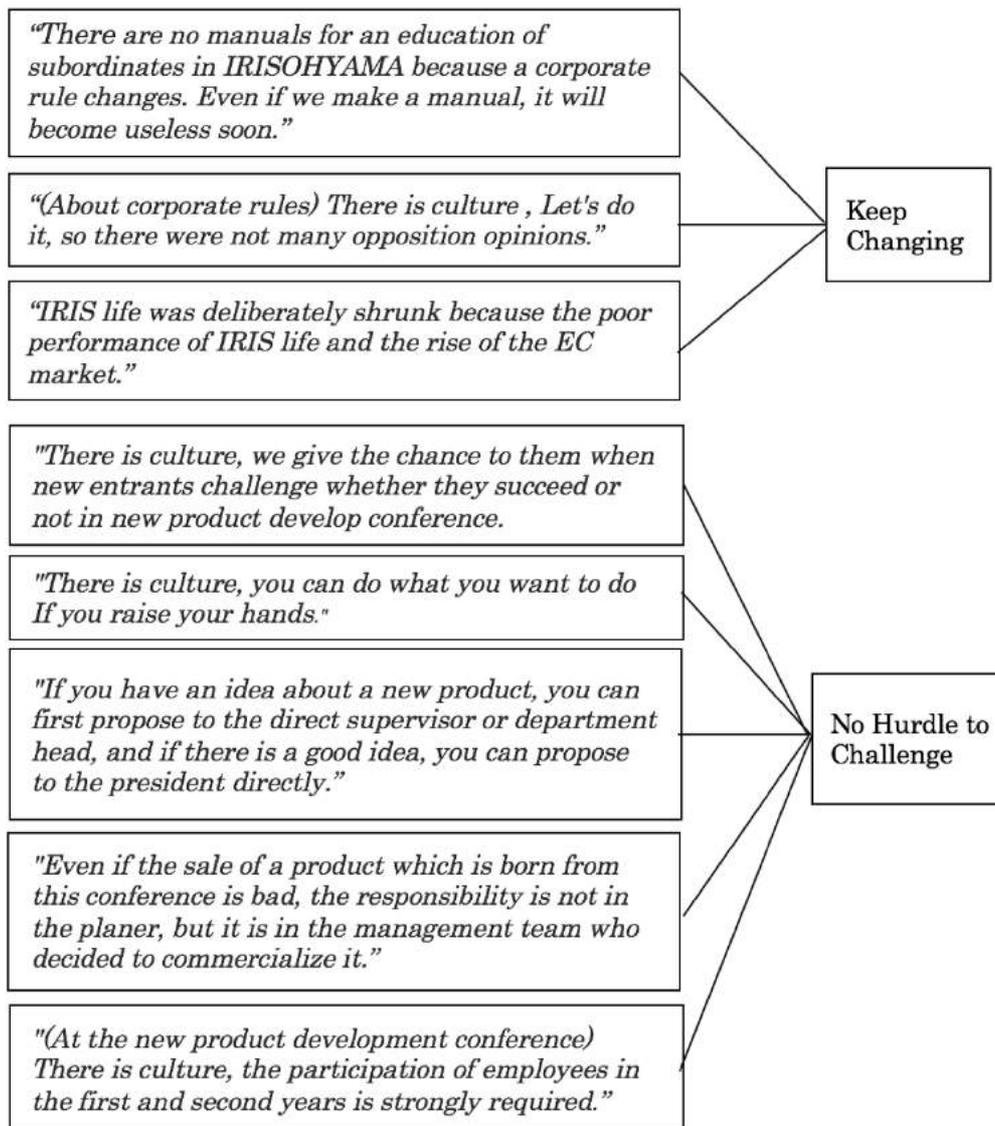
The figure created based on the remarks gathered from the two interviewees is shown below.

From here, in addition to "No Hurdle to Challenge" which can be understood from the above analysis, it seems that there is a corporate culture like "Keep Changing".

Besides, in the interview, we found a factor to be thought to promote the penetration of such corporate culture of IRIS OHYAMA.

In the next section, we reveal the factor that penetrate the corporate culture of IRIS OHYAMA.

<Figure 10> IRIS OHYAMA's corporate culture



(Source: authors)

4-3-3. Discovery

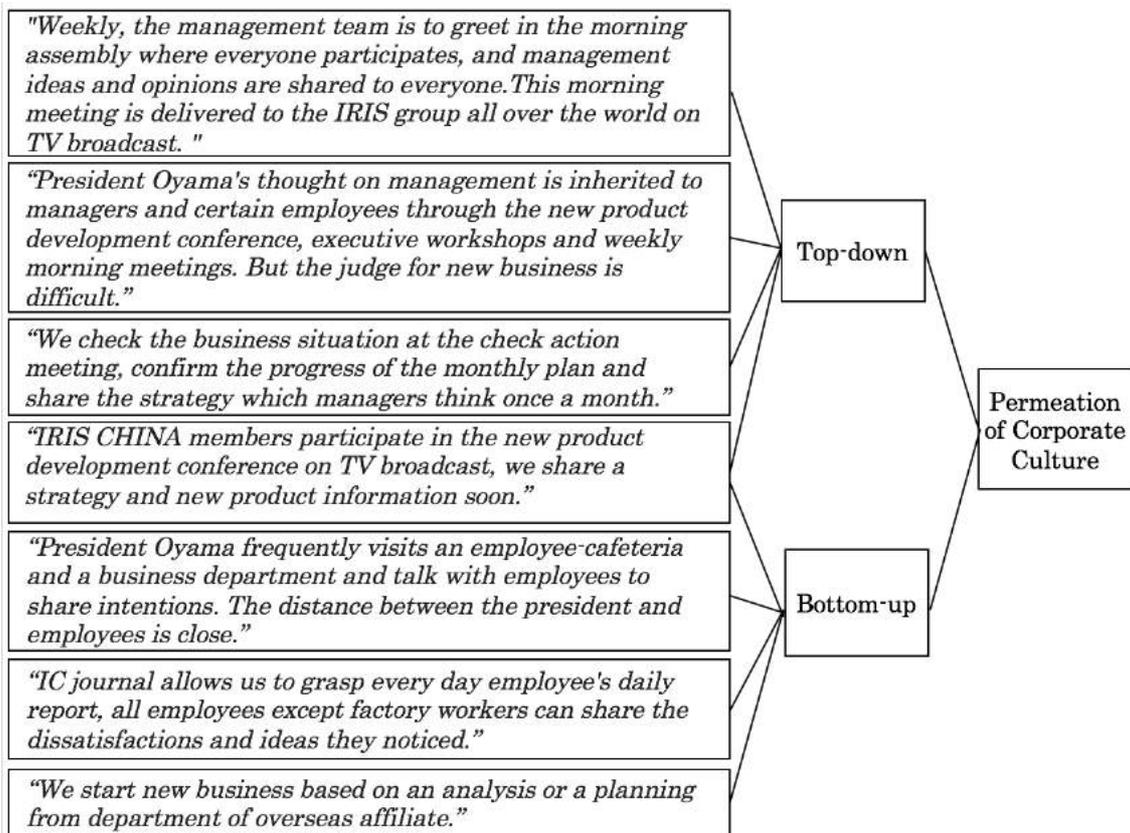
It was revealed that how corporate culture to promote organizational system construction and utilization process penetrate into every employee by the interviewing. The factor is an information sharing system in IRIS OHYAMA. The details are

described below.

It was revealed that five information sharing systems are effective mainly there. The first is a "Daily Report" in which all employees report daily works, problems and suggestions. The second is a "Morning Meeting" in which all employees convey the direction of the company once a week. It is delivered to the IRIS group around the world. The third is the "New Product Development Conference" where the product planning department proposes new products to the management team. The fourth is "Check Action Conference" where a company strategy is discussed. The fifth is a "Project Proposal System" in which employees can propose projects to the management team. I organized the information and created the figure from interviewing below. The corporate culture implicitly interacts and penetrates in the way of both bottom-up and top-down.

In addition, "First of all, managers should present what they want to do as a company and try to aim for that." (Mishina, 2010, 2011) . This also confirms that information sharing system promotes the penetration of corporate culture.

<Figure 11> Penetration of corporate culture by information sharing system



(Source: authors)

4-3-4. Conclusion

Based on the above analysis, we have finally specified the process in which DC is constructed and utilized and also the organizational culture which promotes it, through in-depth study of IRIS OHYAMA. Specifically, organizational system is constructed, adapting to the environment by the emergent processes through trial and error, driven by organizational culture such as "No Hurdle to Challenge" and "Keep Changing". Moreover, we have discovered that an internal system to share information certainly promotes the penetration of culture among the company. It is assumed that thorough information sharing among all the employees has been caused by the actions of both top-down and bottom-up through the five information sharing systems, and has led to

deeper penetration of organizational culture.

5. Discussion

5-1. Conclusion and Contribution of this paper

We indicated a problem that specification of a series of flows from DC construction and utilization up to acquisition of competitive advantage is lack in DC theory. Then we focused on IRIS OHYAMA's environmental adaptability. Demonstrating market strategy, organizational system and its construction process in a chain, we specified it. It was specified in a series of flows from the root of DC construction, utilization and organization system with DC up to competitive strategy showing the effect by DC. This flow is shown in Figure 5-1 below.

IRIS OHYAMA has established the organizational systems, Maker-Vender, "new product development conference" and "R&D laboratory", through an emergent process. The proses was based on corporate culture, "Keep Changing" and "No Hurdle to Challenge". They acted together in a complex manner to create the competitive strategy now. And IRIS OHYAMA maintains a competitive advantage on a sustainable basis while adapting to the environment. We succeeded in specifying DC at the level of corporate action by revealing this company's environmental adaptability from market strategy to internal resource formation process. It seems that this paper helps solve the problem that the DC construction and utilization process is not specified, which is the problem of DC related existing research.

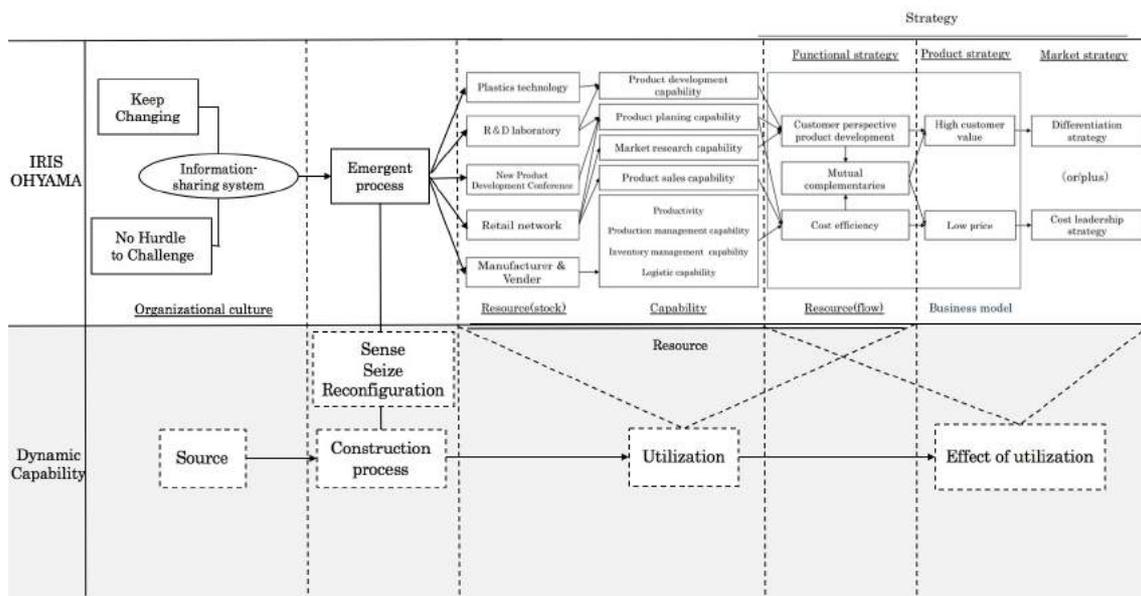
In addition, this research adds knowledge that such information sharing system like IRIS OHYAMA is effective in assertion that corporate culture and management's

intention are important to achieve adapting environment and competitive advantage, which was revealed by Wada (2013: 371~396), Nonaka and Endo (2011). In IRIS OHYAMA, top-down and bottom-up action relationships are established through information sharing system such as a daily report by the IC journal, a morning assembly that Mr, Ohyama expresses his intention to all employees, and check action meeting which is held once a month. Through this, employer and employees of IRIS OHYAMA can share their intention, and corporate culture penetrate. In order to adapt to the environment and form organizational system and acquire competitive advantage, we need to form a corporate culture. In addition, it is important to have appropriate structure of information sharing which penetrate corporate culture.

In conclusion, we can say that this study contributes to academically explain about the deficiencies of the DC concept not only practically demonstrating constructing and utilization of environmental adaptability and competitive strategy.

In addition, by focusing on "How to share corporation culture" not mentioned in the existing research, we could suggest the importance of the information sharing system in DC utilization.

<Figure 12> Specification of DC by IRIS OHYAMA



(Source: authors)

5-2. Problems in this paper and future issues

This paper has four problems and future issues.

Firstly, we analyzed the market strategy to measure the result of IRIS OHYAMA utilizing DC, but we only study about appliances. IRIS OHYAMA had been formed a lot of resources before entering the appliance industry. Therefore, we should have analyzed market strategy in plastic business.

Secondly, this study embodied the construction and utilization process of DC and quantitatively measured the result of the utilization of DC through the case study, but it doesn't quantitatively analyze the process. How long is the period during which DC will be constructed and utilized? In order to solve questions like that, we should collect more accurate data about the firm's history based on the numerical value.

Thirdly, there are few surveyed subjects surveying the corporate culture that affected DC construction and utilization, and indirect verification from the current corporate culture.

Fourthly, we pointed out the existence of information sharing system as a function to encourage corporate culture penetration. We don't solve questions like "Does any company have an information sharing system and encourage the penetration of corporate culture?", "What kind of information sharing system is exist and effective?". As explained above, further research is required to provide knowledge that contributes to the development of DC theory.

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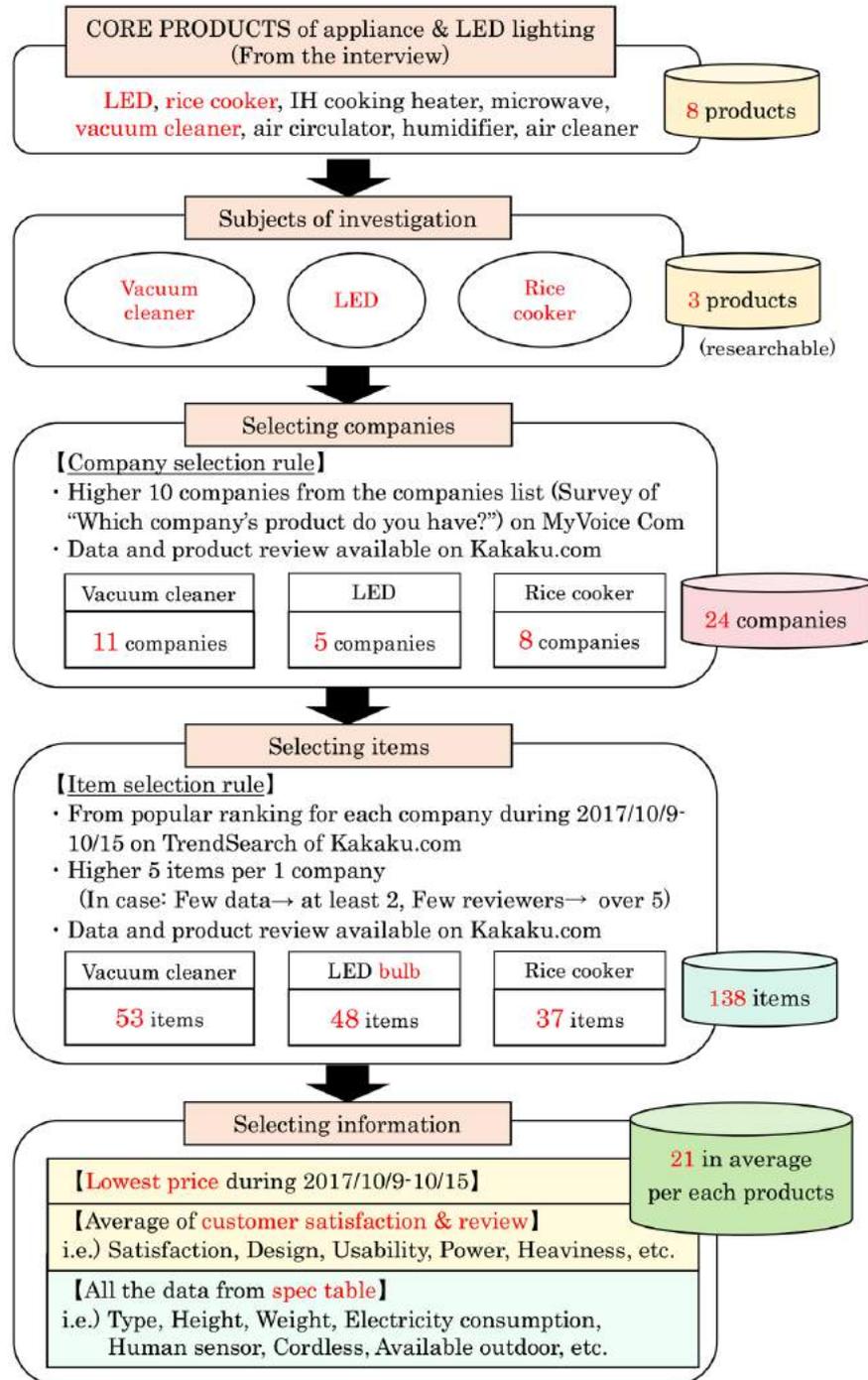
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- 「業界初!よそったカゴリーを表示できる III ジャー炊飯器 アリスオーヤマから」http://navi.jp/mainichi_news/article/5e77f68f286370228e541989cd828e/ (2017年11月14日アクセス)
- 「どんな時代でも利益を出し続ける経営の仕組み」<http://diamond.jp/articles/893338> (2017年11月14日アクセス)
- 「栗園の本質を突き詰める」ことから生まれた型破りのビジネスモデル」http://bizgate.nikkei.co.jp/article/70981523_2.html (2017年11月9日アクセス)

(Source: authors)

Accompanying material 2. Market strategy analysis

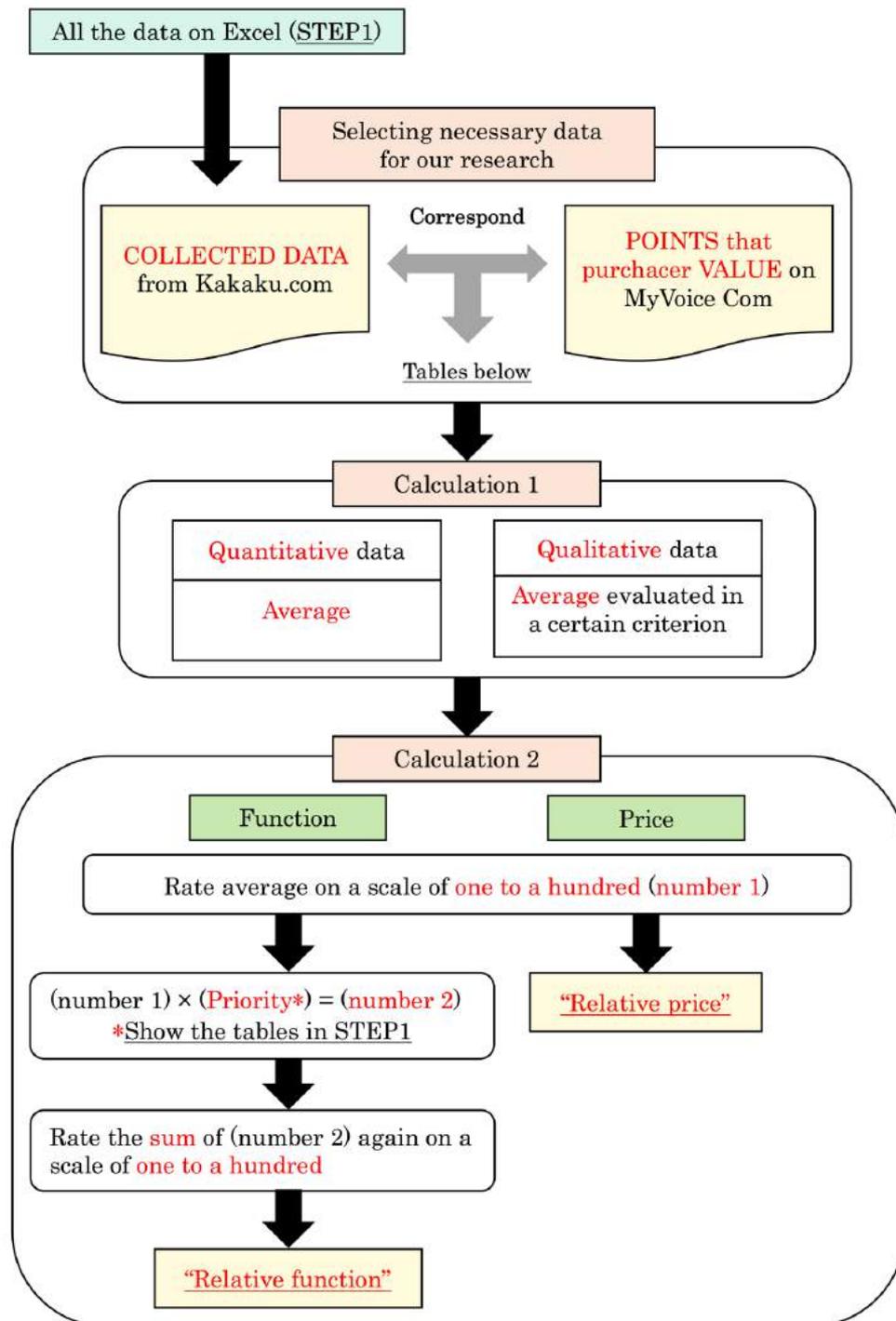
【STEP1】 Procedure to collect all the data



(Source: authors)

We used Kakaku.com (<http://kakaku.com>), because it includes more detailed information of the product review than other E-commerce websites or companies' official websites. And also, in order to select companies and to know the customers' needs, we used “Which company’s product do you have?” and “the points that purchasers value” from MyVoice Com (<http://www.myvoice.co.jp>).

【STEP2】 Procedure to calculate



(Source: authors)

[Common in all products]

調査対象：「MyVoice」のアンケートモニター

調査方法：インターネット調査

調査機関：マイボイスコム株式会社

[Vacuum cleaner]

Points that purchaser value(マイボイスコム)	Kakaku.com	Priority(%)
本体価格	最安価格	60.1
吸引力	吸込仕事率	51.9
	パワー	
本体の大きさ・重さ	体積	40.1
	重量	
メーカー・ブランド	×	39.2
ゴミの捨てやすさ	手入れのしやすさ	35.0
手入れのしやすさ	手入れのしやすさ	33.0
操作性	使いやすさ	32.4
運転音・動作音の静かさ	騒音値	22.4
	静かさ	
本体のデザイン・色	デザイン	17.6
集塵方式（紙パック式・サイクロン式など）	×	16.3
空気が汚れない、ホコリが飛びにくい	集塵方式	15.9
生産国（国内製・外国製）	×	15.7
収納しやすさ	×	13.3
電源コードの有無（コードレス）	コードレス	12.3
消費電力	×	10.6
機能の豊富さ	ごみセンサー	7.6
メンテナンス部品の価格	×	6.8
ネット評判	満足度	6.3
家族の意見	×	5.2
環境への配慮	×	2.9
店員のすすめ	×	2.7
広告やCMの印象	×	1.1

(Source: authors)

※「[22907]掃除機に関するアンケート調査（第5回）」より「5.主利用掃除機のメーカー」と「6.掃除機購入時の重視点」の結果を利用。

〈調査時期〉2017年08月01日～08月05日

〈回答者数〉10804人掃除機所有者10481人

〈設問例〉

(1)5.主利用掃除機のメーカー

（掃除機をお持ちの方）あなたのご家庭で主にお使いの掃除機のメーカー名をお答えください。

(2)6.掃除機購入時の重視点

（全員）あなたは、掃除機を購入するとした場合、どのようなことを重視しますか。

（複数回答可）

[LED]

Points that purchaser value(マイボイスコム)	Kakaku.com	Priority(%)
価格が手頃	最安価格	60.8
デザイン、色	デザイン	41.8
	光色	
光源(LED、蛍光灯、白熱灯など)	×	28.7
メーカー、ブランド	×	27.6
消費電力	消費電力	27.5
大きさ、重さ	×	25.3
適用畳数	×	22.1
国内製	×	18.4
調光機能(昼白色・電球色など)	調光器対応	13.7
	光色切替え	
リモコンの有無	×	13.6
取り付けやすさ	×	12.2
材質(アクリル、ガラスなど)	×	8.9
操作のしやすさ	×	8.7
手入れのしやすさ	×	8.4
耐久性	×	7.4
環境・省エネへの配慮	発光効率	5.5
家族や友人・知人の意見	×	4.2
店員のすすめ	×	2.9
人気がある(売れ筋商品)	×	0.9
外国製	×	0.6
テレビや雑誌、ネット等での評判	×	0.4
広告やCMの印象	×	0.2

(Source: authors)

(1) 「[15714] 家の照明・LED電球に関するアンケート調査」より「6.使用しているLED電球のメーカー」の結果を利用。

〈調査時期〉2011年08月01日～08月05日

〈回答者数〉12454人中LED電球使用者3561人

〈設問例〉(LED電球を使っている方)あなたのご自宅でお使いのLED電球・照明のメーカーをお聞かせください。(複数回答可)

(2) 「[19109]照明器具に関するアンケート調査」より「6.部屋全体用の照明器具購入時の重視点」の結果を利用。

〈調査時期〉2014年06月01日～06月05日

〈回答者数〉11094名

〈設問例〉(部屋全体用の照明器具を購入した方)あなたのご家庭では、部屋全体用の照明器具(部分照明は除く)を購入する際、どのような点を重視しましたか。(複数回答可)

[Rice cooker]

Points that purchaser value(マイボイスコム)	Kakaku.com	Priority(%)
価格	最安価格	61.2
メーカー・ブランド	×	45.3
炊飯容量 (一度に炊ける量)	炊飯量	42.6
大きさ・重さ	サイズ	25.7
	重量	
釜の材質 (鉄・銅・炭など) や厚さ、構造 (真空、多層など)	内釜の厚さ	24.8
生産国 (国内製・外国製)	×	23.2
性能・パワー	×	21.7
手入れのしやすさ	手入れのしやすさ	20.0
加熱方式(IH 方式、スチーム IH、マイコンなど)	×	16.7
デザイン・色	デザイン	16.6
操作の簡単さ	使いやすさ	15.6
省エネ	年間電気代	14.3
好みの硬さのお米が炊けるかどうか	×	11.7
多機能	機能・メニュー	9.5
保温機能	×	9.3
表示のみやすさ	×	7.6
炊き上がりの速さ	×	7.4
運転音・動作音の静かさ	×	4.9
人気がある (売れ筋商品)	×	3.3
家族や知人の評判・口コミ情報	×	3.3
蒸気の量の少なさ	×	2.9
店員のすすめ	×	2.8
広告や CM の印象	×	1.1

(Source: authors)

※ 「[20704]炊飯器に関するアンケート調査 (第6回) 」より「4.所有している炊飯器のメーカー」と「6.炊飯器購入時の重視点」の結果を利用。

〈調査時期〉2015年10月01日～10月05日

〈回答者数〉10321人中炊飯器所有者9718人

〈設問例〉

(1) 4.所有している炊飯器のメーカー

(炊飯器をお持ちの方) あなたのご家庭でお持ちの炊飯器のメーカーをお聞かせください。2台以上お使いの場合は、主にお使いのものについてお聞かせください。

(2) 6.炊飯器購入時の重視点

(全員) あなたが今後炊飯器を購入するとき、どのような点を重視して選びたいですか。(複数回答可)

【STEP3】 Result of calculation used for graphs (already rounded off)

<Vacuum cleaner>

Company	Relative function	Relative price
Panasonic	45	100
TOSHIBA	60	14
Hitachi	58	43
SHARP	38	45
Mitsubishi Electric	29	0
makita	23	56
Twinbird	0	34
Electrolux	32	28
Miele	99	27
Raycop	37	21
IRISOHYAMA	6	62

<LED>

Company	Relative function	Relative price
Panasonic	12	100
TOSHIBA	34	25
IRISOHYAMA	5	0
Hitachi	0	75
Mitsubishi Electric	100	69

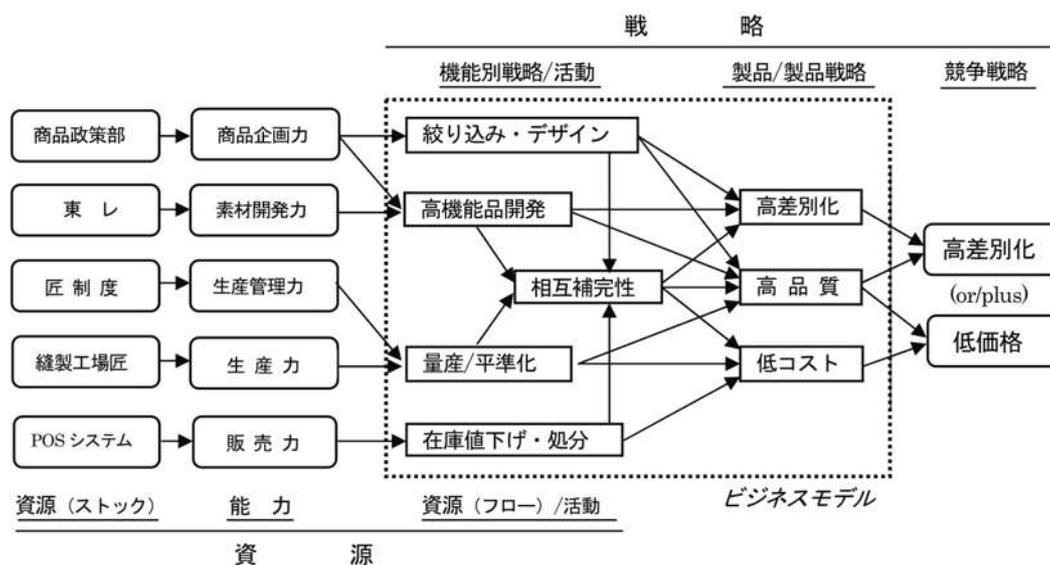
<Rice cooker>

Company	Relative function	Relative price
ZOJIRUSHI	23	95
TIGER	7	39
TOSHIBA	100	70
SHARP	21	37
Mitsubishi Electric	38	100
Hitachi	9	80
Haier	0	0
IRISOHYAMA	17	13

(Source: authors)

Accompanying material 3. Organizational system analysis

【分析フレームワーク：ユニクロの事例】



(河合、2012)

Accompanying material 4. Questionnaire used in the interviews

【Mr. Tanaka】

1. 中国市場への進出経緯

・なぜ当初は、原価、減価償却費の削減のための中国進出だったが途中から戦略変更して現地の市場に進出していったか？

2. 中国市場における戦略

・中国と日本の業態の差異（メーカーリテーラーとメーカーベンダー）

→なぜ進出の際の戦略を変えたか？

・ユーザーイン（需要の創造）がアイリスの方針だが、中国ユーザーと日本ユーザーの相違点は感じているか、また、どのようにニーズ把握を行っているか

・日本市場と中国市場での売上の製品内訳（出来れば他の海外市場も）

・中国での販売チャネルは EC とアイリスライフだけか？

3. 現地拠点における人材管理

・中国の日本語教育に力を入れることの利点はなにか？

→現地語での労務管理とどのような違いが生まれるのか？

・日本語教育することに対して現地では反対があったようだが、どのように対処したのか？

4. 中国市場における事業展開の課題

・中国ビジネスにおいて、日本ビジネスとの違いで対応に苦労した点にどのようなことがありましたか？

・「アイリスオーヤマの経営理念（著者：大山健太郎 出版：日本経済新聞出版社）」にいろいろを要求されたとあり、公的機関への対応に苦労したようだが、その他にどのような経験をしたか？そしてそれをどのように対処したか？

・日本人従業員は最初50人から現在3人に減ったと書いてあったがどのような対策をして日本人従業員を減らすことができたのか？

5. アメリカなど、他海外市場との比較

・中国の他に日本市場とアメリカなど海外市場を比較した際に、市場戦略において苦労したことはあったか？

【Mr. Kurashige】

・新商品開発会議は何年に、何をきっかけとして始まったのか

・メーカーベンダーは何年に、何をきっかけとして始まったのか（導入当初、先行企業や手本とした企業はいたのか）

・情報システムは1996年からどう変わったのか（取引先企業とフロッピーディスクを介して情報交換しているとあったが、現在はどのように情報管理しているのか）

・競合相手はどこか？（商品開発する際に気にする企業など）

・なぜ今フランス、イギリスに工場を作るのか？

・商品が企画会議で決定されてから、開発を経て店頭に並ぶまでどれくらいの長さなのか？

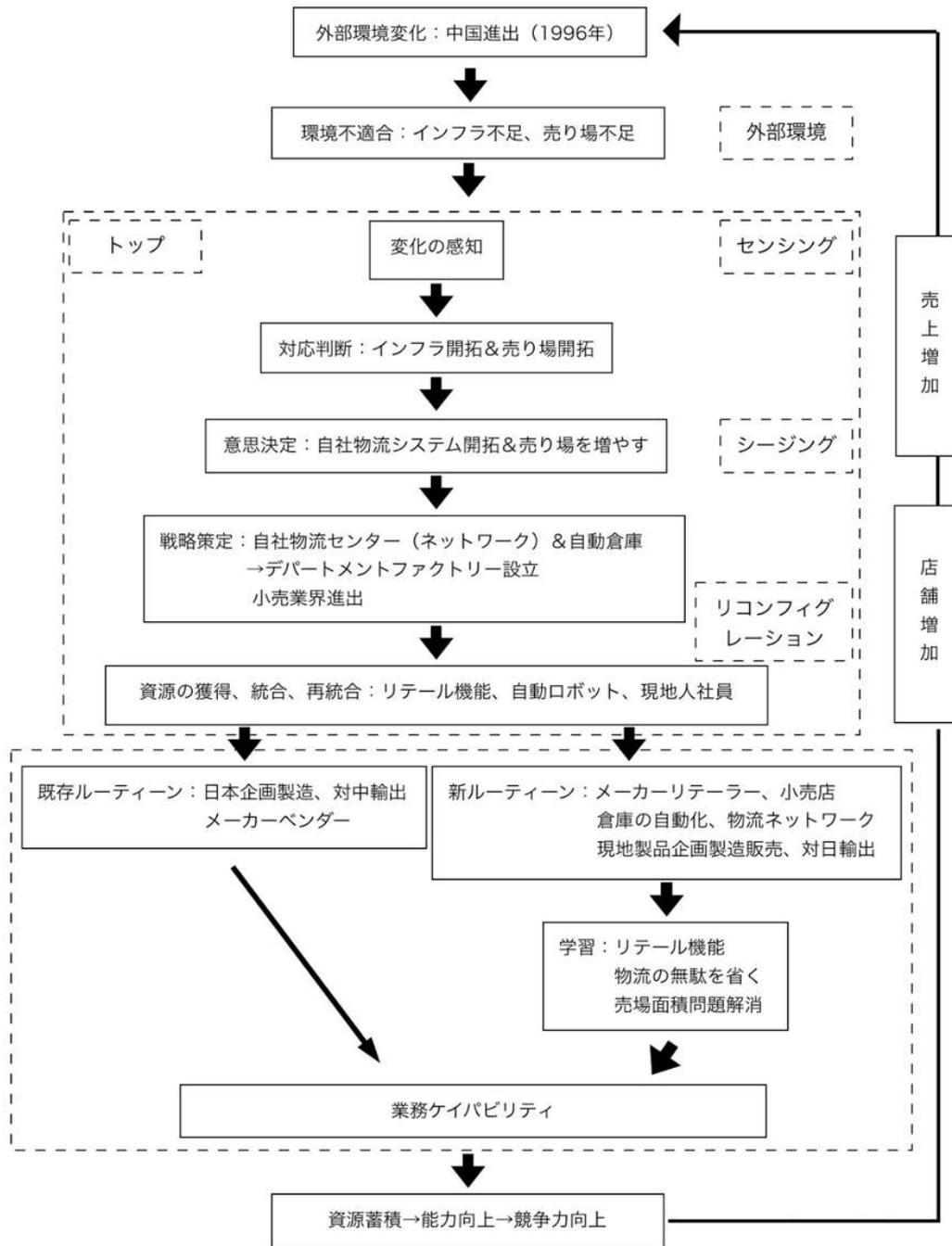
・問屋を使うことは全くないのか？（新事業参入時は問屋を利用した方がいい場合もあるという記事を拝見したが、それでも自ら小売店に売り込むのか）

・中国ではマニュアルがないと聞いたが、国内会社でもやはりマニュアルはないのか？

・メーカーベンダーの機能は企業の拡大・分社化で薄まってしまっているのではないか？

Accompanying material 5. Organizational system construction

【Case of branching out into China】



(Source: authors) (中島, 2012)