

## **Thesis Evaluation for DBA Candidate, Tomonari Komiyama**

DBA Thesis Title

### **Structural Ambidexterity and Coopetition Capability for Industry Incubation: Mission-led Grand Challenges in Japanese Hydrogen Station Industry**

August 9, 2022

ICS DBA Candidate, Tomonari Komiyama has successfully completed his thesis defense on June 23, 2022. The Thesis Committee concludes that Tomonari Komiyama's thesis has fulfilled the requirements for the DBA degree and recommends to grant his Hitotsubashi University's doctoral degree in business administration. Below is a summary of Tomonari Komiyama's thesis, followed by the Committee's evaluation and conclusion.

#### **1. Overview of the Thesis**

The purpose of this thesis is to shed light on the organizational ambidexterity issue by extending the analysis to the industry level. More specifically, the key research question of the thesis is to understand how ambidexterity-related activities can be structured at the industry level to incubate a new industry. To investigate the above research question, an in-

depth case study is conducted in the context of the hydrogen station industry in Japan. Drawing on various sources of archival records, government documentations, and semi-structured interviews, the thesis conducts a solid historical analysis of the industry as well as the analysis of the qualitative data.

The key findings of the research are as follows. First, the planning and support originated from the mission-led government initiatives along with the participating firms' cooperation capability enabled successful structural ambidexterity: firms were able to remain the exploitation of the existing businesses while pursuing the exploration of creating at new industry. Second, the government's continuous effort to spread and share the common mission and goals were found to be effective in legitimizing the industry incubation. Third, cooperation capability enabled the firms to straddle the business boundaries for competition and cooperation. Forth, creating an institutional design such as a collective enterprise enabled firms to pursue structural ambidexterity at the industry level: the independence of the exploitation business being preserved, and the risk and the investment of the explorative business being shared among participating firms.

## **2. The Thesis Committee's Evaluation**

This thesis successfully meets the necessary requirements for DBA research: the research is grounded both in practice and in academia, addresses important managerial issues and provides meaningful theoretical contributions based on a rigorous research method and analysis.

### ***Theoretical Contributions***

The thesis provides several important theoretical contributions for innovation and organization studies. First, while the topic of organizational ambidexterity has been extensively studied in the private sector, only a few studies have investigated how collective

action involving the government can support firms to create new business sectors. This study illustrates that the government can play a critical agent role in fostering an environment for firms to initiate and to organize ambidexterity activities at the industry-wide level. Second, the research incorporates cognitive aspect to prior organizational ambidexterity studies by highlighting the importance of the coopetition mindset or coopetition capability as one of the key enablers. Third, the findings add new insight to understanding structural ambidexterity by introducing the industry as a new unit of analysis. By demonstrating the historical development and the diverse activities engaged by industry stakeholders, the findings enrich the discussion on how to design and define business boundaries to pursue organizational ambidexterity.

### ***Practical Implications***

The key findings of the research offer implications for practitioners involved in new industry incubation. One important policy implication is that facilitating collective action which is carefully designed and institutionalized between private and public sector can contribute to legitimizing and creating an industry. Second, the research offers an alternative way to structure organizational ambidexterity. Firms can benefit by boundary spanning in a strategic manner and negotiate across competitors and industry stakeholders to structurally design exploitation and exploration activities. Recently emerging sectors tackling grand challenges will benefit from experimenting from different combinations of institutional arrangements to effectively sustain economic values but also gain from adding new social values.

### ***3. Conclusion***

The Thesis Committee concludes that Tomonari Komiyama's thesis has fulfilled the requirements for the DBA degree. The Committee therefore recommends to grant Tomonari Komiyama Hitotsubashi University's DBA degree.

Thesis Committee Members

Jinju Lee

Satoshi Akutsu

Kangyong Sun