

論文の内容の要旨

論文題目

The Teaching Effect in Learning Alliances: Research based on the Ford-Mazda and Renault-Nissan Cases

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ABSTRACT

Firms that are engaging in learning alliances will generally strive to learn from each other. However, since in most cases the alliance partners are rivals, they tend to avoid as much as possible teaching each other. This depiction of a learning alliance constitutes the standard view in the alliance literature. In contrast to this typical view, data presented in this dissertation that was gathered through extensive longitudinal case studies of the Ford-Mazda and Nissan-Renault cases reveal much evidence of teaching on all sides. A grounded-theory approach was employed to explain this finding that goes against what is predicted by the extant literature

The Key Research Question of this dissertation is framed as follows:
Why do some firms teach a partner in a learning alliance? Does a teaching firm receive any benefits from teaching?

The findings of this dissertation reveal the following three benefits that may accrue to a teaching firm from its teaching of an alliance partner. First, teaching can assist the learning of a partner firm. Second, teaching can help the teaching firm's own learning from a partner. Third, teaching can contribute

to the internal capability building of the teaching firm.

The first benefit of teaching an alliance partner is that it may contribute to this partner's learning. Although the typical depiction of the learning alliance is one in which an alliance partner's learning is generally not viewed positively. This may not always be the case. In fact, in some cases an alliance partner's learning will be very welcome, and in such cases this first benefit may be sought. This benefit has been emphasized in the vertical alliance type. In the assembler-supplier relationship it is clear that the mutual learning can help the firms deliver a superior product to the end user.

The second benefit of teaching an alliance partner is that it may contribute to the teaching firm's own learning. In order to effectively teach an alliance partner the teaching side needs to understand the learning side. In understanding the learning side, the teacher can gain insights into what specifically are the sources of its alliance partner's capability strengths. This knowledge can then be used to aid the teacher's own learning from the learner.

The third benefit of teaching an alliance partner is that doing so can drive the internal capability building of the teaching firm. In order to teach an organizational capability to a partner, the contents of the organizational capability need to be analyzed and understood by the teaching firm, which will likely require the capability to be made more explicit. The process of doing this analysis and efforts to make the capability more explicit, as well as the act of then teaching this knowledge, can contribute to the teaching firm gaining a deeper understanding of the capability itself. Greater understanding may especially be produced as the capability is taught to an alliance partner, which will likely have a vastly different organizational context from that of the teaching firm. Trying to teach a capability so that it will function in such a different context can be expected to trigger the higher-order learning that can result from inter-organizational relations.

The research also suggests that there are at least three conditions that need to be met for these teaching benefits to accrue to the teaching firm. First, the allied firms must be learning organizations, which includes but is not limited to having the motivation and ability to learn from a partner firm. Second,

the alliance partners must have the motivation and ability to teach each other. Third, the alliance partners must evaluate accurately each other's relative organizational capability strengths and weaknesses.

The first condition holds that there needs to be the ex-ante existence of learning organizations in the alliance partners and the ex-post continuance of the alliance partners as learning organizations after the alliance has been initiated. The term "learning organization" is used in its most basic sense to describe an organization that is able to develop and maintain its distinctive organizational capabilities at industry-leading levels. Such a definition of a learning organization would include a firm having the motivation and ability to learn from an alliance partner when appropriate.

The second condition holds that the allied firms need to possess the motivation and ability to facilitate (i.e., teach) each other's alliance learning. The mere existence of the inter-firm linkages cannot be expected to facilitate a partner's alliance learning if the linkages are not accompanied by a firm's motivation and ability to share knowledge. This may require the recognition that the knowledge that lies at the heart of any organizational capability is not an exhaustible resource.

The third condition holds that the allied firms need to be able to evaluate accurately each other's relative organizational capability strengths and weaknesses. In the absence of this condition, alliance partners cannot be expected to be motivated to engage systematically in mutual learning due to a lack of recognition of the opportunity to do so that an alliance affords. Open access of information between partners will likely facilitate efforts at evaluation. Nevertheless, the capability to perform reasonably accurate evaluations must also be present.

This third condition may be the most difficult to possess and maintain, as capabilities are often difficult to measure and compare across firms, given the dynamic nature of capabilities. Also, since alliances often contain one side which is viewed as the "lead" side (e.g., Ford and Renault in the cases due to their controlling minority ownership stake in Mazda and Nissan, respectively), there are subtle psychological issues and power relations involved which can

complicate objective evaluations of a firm's own capabilities and those of an alliance partner. This third condition may be considered a form of a “capability-finding” ability, where a firm is able to recognize superior capabilities in a partner.

In conclusion, the *raison d'être* of learning alliances is learning. That is, the acquisition of useful knowledge from an alliance partner. As described in Chapter 1, this learning benefit has been well studied in the literature. This learning benefit may be called the *learning effect* of learning alliances. It can be said that the elaboration of this learning effect has been the primary focus of the literature on learning alliances.

This dissertation finds broad support for the existence of the learning effect in the two alliance cases that were examined. In doing so, a relatively understudied area of the alliance literature, namely actual learning results, was studied in detail. Particular attention was paid to the teaching side of the learning transaction, which constitutes another underdeveloped area of the literature. Based on this research approach, the dissertation also argues that in addition to the learning effect, another benefit of learning alliances may exist, namely the benefit of teaching. This dissertation proposes that the three benefits may be termed the *teaching effect* of a learning alliance.

By studying the relatively understudied area of teaching in a learning alliance and detailing the possible benefits to teaching, it is hoped that this dissertation may contribute to alleviating some of the long-standing frustration felt by many practitioners with alliances in general and learning alliances in particular. Dissatisfaction with the results of learning alliance may be due in part to an over abundance of attention on only one side of the learning transaction. Too much focus solely on one's own learning, particularly when it is done at the expense of one's teaching, that is, the helping of a partner's learning, may not be an effective learning policy in real-world business contexts where learning and teaching are generally inexorably intertwined.