

Open Innovation Post-Covid: A study of Japanese SMEs

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Open innovation has mainly been examined on large firms heavily R&D based MNEs, with SMEs receiving little systematic attention from academic researcher. In a period where the pandemic has crippled economies and negatively impacted organisations, a more open and collaborative mode of innovation is required. This study examines the extend to which Japanese SMEs are adopting open innovation strategies and the difficulties within their organisational context. The results of the study support the potential and adoption of open innovation in SMEs and show that expertise is an important factor, especially in situations favouring industry-academia collaboration. However, they are also confident in the technological capabilities that are an inherent source of competitive advantage in their companies and mention the importance of prior arrangements for equitable distribution of results after industry-academia collaboration, highlighting the importance of a stable institutional design.

Key words: Open innovation, SMEs, University-Industry collaboration, Japan.