

# Study on the Improvement of Teaching in the Course "Overview of Japan" in the Context of "Japanese-style Management"

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## Abstract

The Japanese economy is a very important part of the course "Overview of Japan", and it is important for students to understand the "Japanese style of management" in order to understand the Japanese economy. In the 1960s, Japan soared from post-war ruins to become the second largest economy in the world, and its achievements are remarkable. Chinese small and Medium-sized enterprises have developed rapidly after the reform and opening up, and they have also borrowed the experience of "Japanese style management" in their development, but not many of them have succeeded. The reason is that the core of "Japanese style management" is "People-oriented", while most enterprises in China still do not recognize the important role of "people" in the enterprise, resulting in most employees not having a sense of belonging and frequently jumping ship. Therefore, through the analysis of "Japanese management" and the comparison of enterprise management between China and Japan, this paper hopes to make some suggestions for the future development of Chinese SMEs and to propose improvement measures for the teaching of "Japan Overview".

## Keywords

Japanese-style Management; People-oriented; "Overview of Japan" Course.

## 1. Outline of "Japanese-style Management"

### 1.1. Definition

The term "Japanese management" was established after World War II, and is a unique Japanese management system based on Japan itself to make the best use of its people.

As is well known, Japan entered the developed world in the 60s of the 20th century and has the longest history as a developed country in Asia. Japan's industries were devastated by World War II. In the 1960s, Japan became the second largest country in the world in terms of GDP. In the 1960s, Japan became the second largest country in the world in terms of GDP, and "Japanese-style management" began to be known throughout the world. As one of the results, in the 1970s and 1980s, "Japanese management" broke the monopoly of "American management" and became a source of pride for the Japanese. Toyota Motor Corporation and Sony Corporation, for example, became major companies using the "Japanese management" approach and began to be known worldwide. On the other hand, the majority of small and Medium-sized companies, which support the major companies and account for 99% of the total number of companies, have also become long-lived companies. This is the largest number of long-lived companies in the world. Therefore, there were many companies that imitated the "Japanese way of management". Therefore, I believe that Japan's experience in economic development should be studied.

### 1.2. Formation and Development

The "Japanese way of management" is a product of history. Its embryonic period was the Meiji era. Through the Meiji Restoration, a major change, Japan entered the modern society from the

feudal society. During the Meiji era, modern corporations in Japan began to develop under the influence of Western capitalism. During this period, the business rights of state-run companies were transferred to private companies, and zaibatsu were formed. For example, Mitsui, Mitsubishi, and Sumitomo. At the same time, under the influence of Japan's unique values of "harmony" and "family," family business management [6] brought the patriarchal warmth of the family system into corporate management and made it the operating principle of management. Under the family management system, the manager is not only a functional employer and supervisor, but also an absolute authority like a patriarch (head of household) who intervenes in the personal lives of employees both materially and psychologically. On the other hand, he also takes care of his employees, which is equivalent to the duty of family protection. [6] was also formed.

Prior to World War II, the retention rate of skilled workers trained in companies was poor, and job mobility was the norm, making society and companies unstable. Therefore, each company established a lifetime employment and seniority system in order to retain skilled workers.

After the end of the war, the management of Japan was affected by the dismantling of conglomerates by GHQ, the Three Labor Laws [7] The Labor Standards Law, the Labor Union Law, and the Labor Relations Adjustment Law are representative laws in labor relations, and these are called the Three Labor Laws. [7] along with the economic democratization policy through the enactment of the Labor Standards Act, Japanese companies enacted corporate growth and development as their main goals. With the introduction of the Japanese government and the special procurement for Korea, industrial construction, mainly by private industries, was redeveloped. Since this industrial construction was a kind of social mass production, it required the cooperation of workers. Japanese management was very well adapted and formed in such industries. It then became embedded in each industry.

## **2. The Heart of "Japanese-style Management"**

### **2.1. Support for "Japanese Management"**

The causes of Japan's miraculous economic development were analyzed in depth in a 1972 OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) report on the results of its examination of Japan, and the so-called "Three Sacred Treasures" theory. In 1972, the OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development) issued a report on the results of its review of Japan and the so-called "Three Sacred Treasures": lifetime employment, seniority system, and company-based labor union system.

First, the lifetime employment system is the practice in Japan of hiring full-time employees, whereby new school graduates are immediately hired by a company and remain employed by the same company until retirement. It is also called long-term employment practice. This creates a sense of cooperation and trust among employees, as well as loyalty to the company. There is almost no loss of personnel.

Next, the seniority system refers to a personnel system and practice in which positions and wages are increased according to length of service and age, mainly in Japanese public offices and companies. It can increase employees' commitment to the company (sense of belonging to the company) and motivation (work ethic). It can maintain both work efficiency and harmony in human relations in the workplace. In combination with lifetime employment, it is easier to receive appropriate recognition for work with a long-term perspective and work whose results are difficult to see.

Lastly, the company-based labor union system is a labor union that organizes only full-time employees as members in each company. This is a big difference from other countries where there are many occupational unions, which are cross-sectional unions. It cannot exist without an employment relationship with the company. In addition, they are characterized by their

strong independence in organizational management and their strong ties with upper organizations.

## 2.2. The Starting Point of "Japanese-style Management" -- "People"

"Japanese-style management" is a unique management mechanism that was devised to take advantage of the strengths of the Japanese people under the unique social climate and economic environment of Japan, and was created to achieve efficient management results. The national spirit of the Japanese people is "Wa" (harmony). In order to maintain this harmony, human relations must be emphasized. Since Japanese companies were created in this culture, it is safe to say that "Wa" is the core of the culture of "Japanese style management.

Furthermore, as mentioned above, whether it is the "Three Sacred Treasures" or other characteristics, the essence of any company, whether it is a large company or a small and Medium-sized company with longevity, is "people. In other words, it is "humanism".

Humanism is "the principle that emphasizes that people are the most important resource for economic activity, and that it is important to create, maintain, and develop a stable network of people who provide these resources, who provide human resources, and who do business with each other.

Akio Morita (1921-1999), one of the founders of Sony, said in his book "Made in Japan", "Many people have already written about Japanese management. But to tell the truth, there is no special secret to the success of a good company, whether in Japan or in the United States. It is not theory, planning, or even government policy that makes a business successful. It's people. If there is a secret to Japanese-style management, it is that people are the starting point of everything. On its website, Sony describes its management policy as follows the company's website describes the company's management policy as follows: "The number of employees shall be carefully selected and fairly small, and formal job classifications shall be avoided. The surplus profits of the company shall be distributed to all employees in an appropriate manner, and the way to stabilize their lives shall be fully considered and supported from a practical standpoint, so that they can thoroughly understand that the work of the company is their own work.

Therefore, "Japanese-style management" is being developed with regard to "people. The human being is not a robot, but an irreplaceable entity. People are not robots, but irreplaceable beings, and especially experienced people are treasures for companies. Humans are also the source of new creations. They are also a source of knowledge for new technological transformation. Therefore, a company can survive in a long-term environment.

## 3. Management of Small and Medium Enterprises in China

### 3.1. Current Situation

In Japan, there are 50,000 enterprises with longevity of more than 100 years, while the average life span of Chinese enterprises is only 6.5-7 years, according to the survey "The Success and Failure of Chinese Enterprises" by Beijing Chiyuan Enterprise Management Research Center. The average lifespan of a privately owned enterprise is only 2.9 years. According to a survey of 5,000 privately owned enterprises in Zhongguancun's "electronics street" in Beijing, only 430 have been in operation for more than five years. Only 3% of the total had been in operation for more than eight years. Moreover, the average lifespan of China's top 500 enterprises is about 40-50 years.

Most of China's small and medium enterprises do not fully utilize their human resources. Managers are too leader-oriented and ignore the importance of teamwork. They also do not follow the system. Let me give you an example of Kehlihua, a small business that became a major software company. The soul of Kehlihua was the leader - Song Chao brother. Initially, the

company started with a book called "Learning Revolution," which was advertised as "selling 10 million copies in the first 100 days at a publishing cost of 100 million yuan, including publicity and advertising. In the first 100 days of its release, it sold 10 million copies at a cost of 100 million yuan, including publicity and advertising. However, Song Zhao brother advocated to his employees that "management in the information age is 'no management'. The management of the company continued according to Song's will. In the end, the company failed due to poor management and a mistake in purchasing the bonds of A-Cheng Iron and Steel Group.

On the other hand, for the sake of immediate profits, the company cut costs with low salaries and little employee development training. Other than that, in Japan, companies have a system of approval and rooting to ensure that all employees can participate in the management of the company. This is where employees' proactivity and initiative in their work is brought out. At the same time, the democratic and scientific nature of decisions is also enhanced. In contrast, in China, in terms of decision-making and information sharing, the decision-making system and information is proprietary from top to bottom, making it difficult to share, and therefore employees do not contribute their wisdom to corporate management. As a result, many employees move out of the company, product quality cannot be ensured, and the company's operation becomes difficult, and finally it goes bankrupt.

### **3.2. Weaknesses of China's Small and Medium-sized Enterprises**

The majority of small and Medium-sized enterprises in China do not fully utilize their human resources. Managers are leader-oriented and ignore the importance of teamwork. They also do not follow the system. Let me give you an example of Kehlihua, a small business that became a major software company. The soul of Kehlihua was the leader - Song Chao brother. Initially, the company started with a book called "Learning Revolution," which was advertised as "selling 10 million copies in the first 100 days at a publishing cost of 100 million yuan, including publicity and advertising. In the first 100 days of its release, it sold 10 million copies at a cost of 100 million yuan, including publicity and advertising. However, Song Zhao brother advocated to his employees that "management in the information age is 'no management'". The management of the company continued according to Song's will. In the end, the company failed due to poor management and a mistake in purchasing the bonds of A-Cheng Iron and Steel Group.

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### **3.3. Reasons Why "Japanese Style Management" Applies to Chinese Enterprises**

For the sake of enterprise development, Chinese enterprises are keen on imitating the successful management methods of foreign enterprises. However, corporate management is deeply connected to the culture of the country. Therefore, there are various management systems, such as Western, Japanese, and Chinese management. Right now, China's management system is mostly imitating American management. Although American management is advanced, it does not have a good effect on Chinese companies. The reason for this is cultural differences.

The American culture was built on Christianity and other religions. The core of the culture is the value of "self". We place a high value on "self" and push for individualism and personal ideals. Competition as an individual is also fierce. For example, one of Hewlett-Packard's corporate cultures is "respect for the value of the individual," and IBM also emphasizes "respect for the individual. Japan, on the other hand, is an agrarian nation and has the concept of "valuing the community" such as the "family" and "earthly relations. Furthermore, Japan has been greatly influenced by the Confucian culture of "Jin, Yi, Rei, Ji, Shin" and "Chu". Therefore, cooperation in human relations and stability in life are more important than the "individual. Since China belongs to the same Eastern cultural sphere as Japan, from a cultural point of view, Japanese style management may be more adaptable. For example, Lenovo, another IT company in China, aims to "share" and "individuals grow with the company".

#### **4. "Japanese-style Management" and "Japan Overview" Course Improvement Measures**

The "Japanese way of management" was formed under Japan's unique social climate and economic environment, and it is not perfect due to problems such as unclear authority and responsibility. Also, due to the cultural differences between China and Japan, it is not completely applicable to small and Medium-sized enterprises in China, but I think the core of "humanism" should be learned in the development of small and Medium-sized enterprises in China. Of course, corporate culture, corporate strategy, and brand awareness are also important in the development of an enterprise.

The course "Overview of Japan" is a highly practical cultural knowledge course. By interpreting the background of China and Japan, it increases students' knowledge and vocabulary, and enhances their basic language knowledge and ability training through cultural knowledge to further improve their Japanese language skills.

In the relationship between teaching and learning, students' learning should be the main focus, actively mobilizing their interest in learning, developing their ability to find information on their own, and properly guiding their learning. Therefore, teachers should encourage students to think independently during lectures, ask them to do pre-study before class, look up relevant materials, and motivate them to participate in class discussions. Outside the classroom, students should be encouraged to collect course-related materials through multiple channels to conduct research and study, so that they can truly understand the deeper aspects of Japanese society, and train students to become talents who have a proper understanding of Japanese customs and culture and a good knowledge of foreign languages.

The management model of Chinese and Japanese enterprises shows that there are obvious differences between China and Japan in various aspects. When teaching the economic aspects of Japan, the course should give students an in-depth understanding of the differences between the Japanese style of management of Japanese enterprises and the business model of Chinese enterprises, and make in-depth comparisons so that students can accumulate original materials outside of class through library access and online collection, and after personal analysis and sorting, transform them into public explanatory scripts for publication and discussion in class, thus deepening their understanding of Japan as well as China This will deepen students' understanding of Japan and China.

#### **5. Conclusion**

In this section, I have discussed the current state of management of small and Medium-sized enterprises in China, and analyzed their weaknesses in comparison with Japanese companies. "First, I summarized various aspects of "Japanese-style management" and made a definition for

this text. Then, I discuss the formation and development of "Japanese management", which was formed in response to the development of society. Then, I discussed the reasons why "Japanese management" is applicable to Chinese enterprises.

The course "Overview of Japan" is a very practical course of cultural knowledge. From the management mode of Chinese and Japanese enterprises, it can be seen that there are obvious differences between China and Japan in various aspects, and teachers of Japan Overview should guide students to compare the differences between China and Japan in depth, so as to deepen their understanding of Japan and China.

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