

Case-based Analysis of the Impact of Japanese National Culture on Corporate Culture

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Abstract. In order to explore the impact of Japanese national culture on corporate culture, the impact of Japanese corporate culture on the national culture is explored through four representative national cultures: village culture, Confucian culture, Buddhist culture and Shinto culture in Japanese traditional culture, using case analysis method and combining specific cases. The results show that Japanese national culture has been integrated with corporate culture. The concept of "family-based", people-oriented idea, traditional thrift concept and loyalty spirit contained in national culture are embodied in corporate culture and can be transformed into different mechanisms. Based on the discussion on the influence of Japanese national culture on corporate culture, the results are as expected. Although there are still some shortcomings in the research process, the research results still provide some reference and guidance for the better development of Chinese corporate culture in the future.

Keywords: Village culture, Confucian culture, Buddhist culture, Shinto culture, thrift concept.

1. Introduction

Since the birth of "corporate culture" in the 1970s, Japanese corporate culture has attracted much attention. The unique corporate culture of Japan makes Japanese corporates possess extraordinary market competitiveness and promotes the rapid development of Japanese economy [1,2]. On the other hand, national culture is the cradle of corporate culture and Japanese corporate culture can find the "Dahe soul" of the Japanese nation [3].

The Japanese national culture is deeply influenced by Chinese culture. After the historical precipitation, the "Dahe" nation took the essence and gradually formed the unique national culture of Japan. Japanese national culture is the inexhaustible ideological source of Japanese corporate culture [4,5]. On the basis of its unique national culture, Japanese corporates have formed a distinct Japanese-style business philosophy. In the process of business management, they are deeply influenced by Confucian culture. They emphasize the management of "human nature", adhere to the business philosophy of "harmony of righteousness and interests" and "people-oriented", and attach importance to the role of interpersonal relations, group consciousness and sincere cooperation [6]. Complying with business ethics, strengthening collective consciousness, and attaching importance to the spiritual factors such as common goals, common values, behavior and morality formed in the process of business operation, these business concepts directly affect the performance of Japanese corporates. It can be seen that Japanese national culture is the connotation of Japanese corporate culture. To study Japanese corporate culture, it is necessary to study the connotation of national culture in corporate culture [7]. This paper will refer to several cases to analyze the impact of Japanese national culture on the corporate culture, in order to play a reference role in the development of Chinese corporate culture.

2. Method

Taking Japanese corporate culture as the research object, using case analysis method, through the case study of Japanese corporate culture, how Japanese national culture has an impact on all aspects of corporate culture is elaborated. Case analysis is one of the most common and basic research methods in management research. Case analysis is widely used in western management theory research. Many of the classical conclusions are summarized from a large number of case studies. The greatest advantage of case analysis method is that it can get credible research results based on

theoretical basis through practical cases and theoretical analysis. In case analysis, formulas (1) and (2) are often used when data statistics are involved.

Computation of simple means:

$$\bar{X} = \frac{X_1 + X_2 + \dots + X_N}{N} = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^N X_i}{N} \tag{1}$$

Calculation of weighted mean:

$$\bar{X} = \frac{X_1F_1 + X_2F_2 + \dots + X_NF_N}{F_1 + F_2 + \dots + F_N} = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^N X_iF_i}{\sum_{i=1}^K F_i} \tag{2}$$

3. Results and Discussion

Japanese national culture is deeply influenced by Confucian and Buddhist cultures from China. On this basis, it gradually forms its own local religious culture, namely Shinto culture, and the inherent village culture in Japanese territory. It can be seen that Japanese culture belongs to the culture with diversified and comprehensive development. Cultural diversity often has the following advantages and disadvantages in the development of enterprises, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Advantages and disadvantages of cultural diversity

	Synergy	Thinking communication	Action	Culture	Between leaders and employees
Advantages	Bringing Organizational Benefits	Easy to accept and open new ideas	Enhancing creativity	It's easy to get inspiration from people around you who have a unique culture.	Increasing employee understanding and work efficiency
Disadvantages	Increasing organizational costs	Causing communication barriers	Difficulties in coordination of actions	Increasing work costs due to cultural incomprehension	Overgeneralized organizational strategy and practice

In the mid-1990s, Dutch management consultant Von Strupnell explored the cultural characteristics of many countries, among which the survey on Japanese cultural characteristics is shown in Table 2.

Table 2. The country cluster and cultural characteristics of Von Strupnell (Japan)

Features	Seven aspects of culture						
	Individualism and collectivism	Particularity and Diffusion	Universality and Specificity	Neutrality and emotion	Achievement and attribution	Time orientation	Environment
Japan	Collective	Diffusion	Specificity	Neutrality	Attribution	Medium- and long-term adaptation	Adaption

It can be seen from the table that the previous studies on Japanese culture are too conceptual and should be studied in detail. Next, the impact of Japanese national culture on corporate culture will be discussed from four aspects: village culture, Confucian culture, Buddhist culture and Shinto culture.

3.1 Impact of Village Culture on Japanese Corporate Culture

The unique geographic environment and family relationship of Japanese villages have formed a Japanese village culture centered on "home" culture, with strict hierarchical order and with collective interests as its priority. The influence of village culture on Japanese corporate culture is mainly reflected in two aspects: the concept of "enterprise-based" replaces the concept of "family-based" and the lifelong employment system is implemented.

In Japanese enterprises, the sense of group belonging develops into collectivist values. Workers and companies are the fate community of "sharing happiness with each other and overcoming difficulties together". Matsushita Electric Industrial Co. founder, Matsushita Takashi, promotes this spirit of collectivism, and carries this value into the life of enterprises, forming Matsushita's seven famous creeds-industry serving the country, being upright and striving upward, friendly and consistent, courteous and modest, adapted to assimilation and grateful for their country. At the same time, Matsushita Electric Industrial Co. is also the originator of lifelong employment system, which is universally acknowledged in Japanese business circles. Matsushita Takashi has ordered that it will not dismiss any employees, even in the economic downturn. And Matsushita Electric Industrial Co. indeed did not dismiss any employees. The employees do not need to worry about unemployment, and they will work harder for the company. This kind of lifelong employment system produced under the "home" culture gives employees a sense of security, greatly enhances the sense of belonging and loyalty of employees, makes the employment relationship more stable, which is conducive to win-win cooperation between owners and employees, and jointly promotes the enterprise forward.

3.2 Influence of Confucian Culture on Japanese Corporate Culture

Around the 5th century, after Chinese Confucianism was introduced into Japan through Korea, the Japanese nation developed Confucianism combined with its own inherent cultural characteristics and formed its own unique Japanese Confucianism. Among them, the main idea of "people-focused" has been developed in enterprise management as "people-oriented" business philosophy.

Japanese enterprises are people-oriented. Taking Toyota as an example, the management system of Toyota pays special attention to the front-line employees of enterprises, and considers them as one of the foundations of enterprises. Therefore, various basic courses are offered continuously to improve the technology and quality of employees, and they are committed to arousing their abilities and enthusiasm. Every employee of the enterprise has the opportunity to use his or her abilities to solve any problems that arise in his or her work. Toyota's success cannot be separated from this reasonable and effective bottom-up management mechanism, which enables every employee to participate in the operation and management of the enterprise, so that every employee can recognize and assume their responsibilities, and maximize the wealth for the enterprise. Meanwhile, Toyota also attaches great importance to staff education, and has established its unique education system, which includes three parts: workplace education, amateur education, and self-inspiration education. Toyota has also invented "personality counterpart appraisal system" and "self-declaration system". Later, Toyota founded Toyota Higher Industrial Park and Toyota University of Technology to train talents for Toyota enterprises. Toyota's corporate culture model is shown in Figure 1.

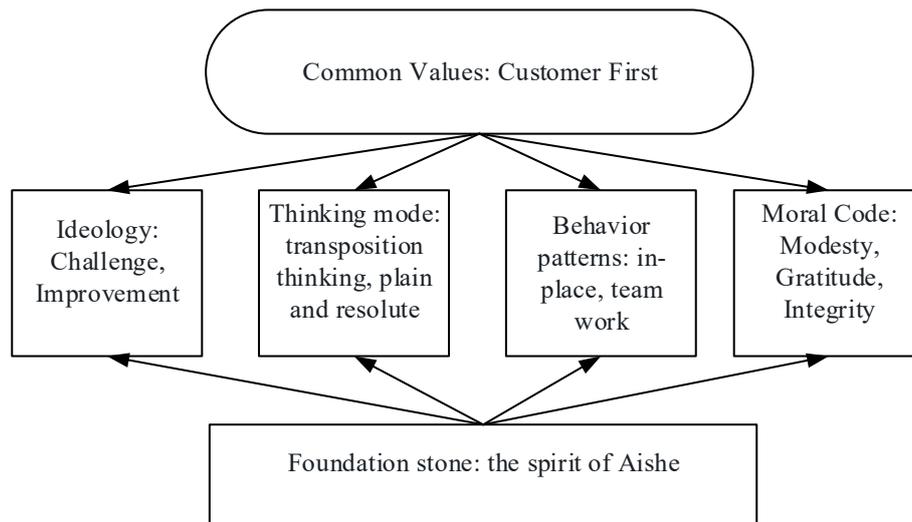


Figure 1. Toyota's corporate culture model

3.3 Effect of Buddhist Culture on Japanese Corporate Culture

The influence of Buddhism on Japanese corporate culture is mainly embodied in the social moral rationality principle of "work for beauty" formed by the development of Zen's "doing business" thought, and the traditional thrift concept which has been inherited from generation to generation.

In the book *Dry Law* of the famous Japanese entrepreneur Mr. Inamori, he introduced his views and attitudes towards labor. He believed that labor was a noble act and could improve a person's soul. The Japanese people are well-known workaholics, often referred to as "worker bees" and "economic animals". They work like battles, never slackening from morning till night. In the work, they are unmanned, loyal to their duties, contending for every minute, and fully mobilizing every nerve and muscle of the whole body, and everyone seems to be a high-speed running machine.

The concept of thrift formed under the influence of Buddhist culture has a positive impact on Japan's capital accumulation and the development of modern enterprises. Taking Toyota as an example, it is well known that in the 21st century, the problem of resources has become a worldwide topic, which has not been omitted by Toyota. After the establishment of new company, Hiichiro Toyota took 6% of annual sales as innovative technology funds, led a huge R&D team of 12,000 people, and started the invention and creation of "green" cars. After more than five years of unremitting efforts and repeated tests, in December 1997, Toyota launched the world's first car's predecessor that is able to do large-scale production. Its average mileage consumes at least twice as much energy as the average gasoline vehicle, while its pollutants are reduced by 90%. The development of this new product is an important step in the development of energy vehicles.

3.4 Role of Shinto Culture on Japanese Corporate Culture

Shintoism is a religion of the Japanese Aboriginal people. Ancient Japanese regarded all kinds of animals and plants in nature as gods. They believed that all the mountains, rivers, plants and trees in the world were spirits, and worshipped nature as the main religion. Shintoism in Japan has developed from the initial worship of animism, nature and soul to the belief of polytheism and pantheism, which is called polytheism, and the worship of the emperor originated from it.

The loyalty spirit in Mikado worship gradually penetrated into the management of Japanese enterprises in the last century. The entrepreneurs make use of the loyalty spirit of the Japanese nation and strengthen the loyalty concept of enterprise staff through the education of enterprise culture. In practice, Japanese enterprises also build corporate culture through lifelong employment, employee stock ownership and encouraging employees to participate in decision-making, so as to cultivate and enhance employees' loyalty to the enterprise. Japanese employees are also loyal to the enterprise and willing to devote their lives to the enterprise they serve.

The reward advocated in Shintoism is embodied in Japanese enterprises as "production reward, industry reward". In Japanese enterprise management, they do not put profit first, but serve the

country first. For example, Matsushita Electric Industrial Co. advocates "industry for the country"; Toyota calls for "concerted efforts to sincerely engage in business development and serve the country with the achievements of the industry"; Japan TDK advocates "contributing to the world cultural industry".

4. Conclusion

Japan's economy developed rapidly after World War II. Japan can achieve rapid economic growth in a relatively short period of time, mainly due to the Japanese corporate culture. The village culture, Confucianism culture, Buddhism culture and Shinto culture in Japanese traditional culture are the four representative national cultures, respectively. Combined with specific cases, the impact of Japanese corporate culture by national culture is explored. The results show that Japanese national culture has been integrated with corporate culture. The concept of family-based, people-oriented, traditional thrift and loyalty spirit contained in national culture are embodied in corporate culture, and can be transformed into different mechanisms, such as lifelong employment system, employee participation in decision-making system and so on.

To sum up, based on Japanese national culture, combined with specific cases, its impact on corporate culture is discussed, and the results are as expected. It provides some reference and guidance for the development of Chinese corporate culture. However, there are still some deficiencies in the research work of this paper. For example, the research area is too large, and there must be many aspects that cannot be involved. Therefore, the future study of Japanese corporate culture can take one of these aspects as the center for detailed and in-depth exploration.

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