

# *Would British Business Management Style be affected by the Japanese Approach in the Context of Globalization?*

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**Abstract**—The management styles of Japanese are definitely effective in the business operations. This article aims to identify whether the British business management style could be affected by the Japanese approach due to the Japanese branches in the UK. The cultural differences should be existed and stable to show the obvious gap even though the convergency trend from the globalization pressure. Hence, the Japanese subsidiaries in the UK would be also hard to copy the operating system in Japan. However, the managers of the UK could learn the experiences from the Japanese subsidiaries in some extent to help British company to get more productivity. The paper identifies the tasks and principles and evaluates the influences of Japanese branches in the UK. Then the approaches of the learning of Britain organization have been analyzed.

**Keywords**—British; Japanese; management style; cross-cultural differences

## I. INTRODUCTION

The United Kingdoms is an important developed country in the world. The long history has made the British punctuality, high quality life pursuing and principled with many characteristics. Moreover, this country is a huge consuming market which is open for all the legal businesses from another countries. The British exercise considerable influence and leadership in economic, trade, and political matters. British tend not to accept the concept of management privileges, and they are more equal to each other [1]. The subordinate can express their different opinions more directly to authority. Some countries have traded with the UK for many years such as Japan. The YKK has been an obvious example which is the first to manufacture in England in 1966. The business management styles are very different between in the companies from these two countries. And the productivity gap that exists between the UK's organization and Japan's organization. The paper aims to research the factors led the gap and how the Japanese management approach in the subsidiaries located in the UK would be affected to manage the British to produce better productivity. Therefore, the experience could be learned by the British companies to optimize their management style [2].

## II. THE OVERVIEW OF JAPANESE SUBSIDIARIES IN THE UK

### A. Cross-cultural Differences between Two Countries

Cross-cultural differences would have affected the effectiveness of subsidiaries sometimes. Specifically, the differences such as life-time employment, the Keiretsu system and traditional production operations should have been successfully leading the significant profits turnaround against the decreasing predictions about some Japanese organizations [3]. Therefore, it could be researched that how great international differences are in management approaches in the context of global competition and what the British managers could learn from the Japanese management in their subsidiaries with the almost same kind of local employees. Moreover, the British management style might have been improved with the learning of the management approaches from the Japanese branches in the UK.

### B. Japanese Subsidiaries in the UK

For many years, the performances of Japanese industry were regarded in the UK as remarkable but basically irrelevant. It is true that the success of Japanese management methods such as Japanese industrial relations and many features of Japanese social life should have been basically different from British. Hence, it would be not possible for British managers to learn from Japanese [4].

However, the managers have been desired to acquire the Japanese management approach with the arrival of Japanese manufacturing subsidiaries in Britain because the local people can also get the huge achievements in the Japanese subsidiaries. British employees in Japanese-owned firms should have generally seen the management of their employers as being "different" from what is customary in the UK. They may be conditioned to expect an unusual style of management by continuous press to some extent but see their management as not only different from but superior to the British management with which they were familiar.

Therefore, it is important to consider the means to transfer Japanese management practices to Britain. The apparent difficulty of British managers in absorbing the Japanese

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approach may constitute a longer-term obstacle. Generally, the subsidiary would use the Japanese management style with a Japanese manager or director, and one or two other Japanese senior executives. However, other managers and the normal employees should be found in local people due to the cost reasons [5]. Currently there are many Japanese manufacturing firms in Europe covering most sectors of commerce. Hence, it means that some Japanese are positioned in these companies as senior managers or important staff. But the majority of line management and supervisory positions were held by British which means that the Japanese firms do not show the typical Japanese management practice directly, other than through the leadership of expatriate senior management. The three methods are used to transfer Japanese management practices from one firm to another. The first method is to send some line managers and supervisors to Japan for induction and training in the parent company. The training could help the British people to adapt to the Japanese operating system and real work culture. Then some specific young Japanese supervisors, technicians and engineers who would play an important role in communicating technical procedures and standards can be secondment to the British subsidiary. Lastly, British workers could have been directly trained or instructed by a Japanese expatriate as many as possible [6].

### III. THE TASKS AND DISCIPLINES OF JAPANESE SUBSIDIARIES IN THE UK

Management style is a topic that has been extensively studied by many management researchers. However, the western researches on the topic have proved of limited use to describe the style of production management encountered in Japanese-owned subsidiaries. Some dimensions of the Japanese approach can be described through established "behavioral science" concepts of management style. One of the most widely used concepts of management style is the contrast between "task-centered" or "production-centered" management on one hand, and "people-centered" or "employee-centered" management on the other. Though care for the welfare of personnel has been certainly important with establishing good practice in British industry, almost all the aspects of management practice which workers regarded as distinctive were concerned with performance of the production task [7].

Another familiar difference is between "authoritarian" styles of management and "democratic" styles of management. It could be said that the Japanese firms were towards the "authoritarian" attitude. The Japanese managers have enforced strict discipline and placed a strong emphasis on adherence to rules and procedures. Meanwhile, workers in Japanese organizations generally have not felt that there was a high level of consultation or management interest in their opinions. The daily section meetings in Japanese-owned companies have aimed to pass down information and to plan the day's work which means they were again task-related rather than consultative [8].

For the management level, a distinguish generally regarded as important is between "close" and "general" control over work. Close supervision involves maintaining continuous contact with the operating process to identify the individual employee's performance most of the time, while general

supervision involves greater emphasis on planning and arranging. Japanese managers seemed to be required to work in both of these styles. They should pay attention to the planning and organization of work and emphasize on close involvement with the employees' task. Therefore, it is obvious that the Japanese management style is highly task-centered, authoritarian and indeed disciplinarian. Moreover, it could be seen that a task-centered style of management takes on a different meaning when the managers are prepared to work on equal terms with their workers and to share the disciplines of production. Managers who take part in the detail of production show the high importance they attach to the work and develop team spirit.

### IV. THE EVALUATION OF INFLUENCES OF JAPANESE SUBSIDIARIES

#### A. No Mistakes for any Management Styles

There would be not absolute right side in the comparison of different management styles from cultural differences. It is impossible to identify which management methods should be "better" in a comprehensive standpoint. The different management styles have been formed partly by different cultural factors which should not be judged. The Japanese management style which could improve productivity should be preferred by "rational people". However, it does not mean the British should do exactly the same with the Japanese such as longer working. It could not be evaluated that whether the management style of Japanese or the UK is better or worse because they derive from their own culture.

#### B. Keeping the Right Learning Attitude

The influences of the management style in Japanese subsidiaries located in Britain should be evaluated by the learning attitudes of the British organizations. It should be known that the learning of an individual member in an organization should be different from organizational learning. Individual learning has to be exchanged and shared with other members and be transformed into common knowledge before the organization can be said to learn. Specifically, it is a sign of the existence of learning when a unit of an organization acquire new knowledge. However, there is no chance for sharing through the organization as long as it is hidden inside the unit. Organization might only be able to widen its learning if it is distributed the learning to other units. Furthermore, the value of the learning would be increasing when other units interpret this information from their own perspectives which guides the organization to get stronger ability to learn. entheses.

#### C. Effects of Globalization

Japanese organizations have been considered more strategic than the companies in Britain. In addition, the individual trade patterns and multinational enterprise behavior have changed less than someone supposed according to globalization pressures for convergence. Hence, it might be stable for the differences in national systems and cultures as opposed to radical convergence. It has been assumed that the actions of changing are explained by global competitive and inter-organizational cooperation which are also perhaps constrained

by stakeholder pressures and cultural values. The increasing differences between Japan and the UK are shown in terms of strategic planning and financial techniques.

#### *D. Some Debates in the Japanese Management Style*

The arguments about the job opportunities for women have been spread all over the world. In addition, it is generally harder for women to be promoted in one organization. Actually, the obstacles for women as senior managers are existed across the globe. And the situations are worse in some areas of the world such as Japan. It could be found that British and Chinese women could be easier to get powerful positions than Korean or German women. Specifically, women are still majority underrepresented in the position of top management even though they represent 43 percent of the workforce in European.

Moreover, the expected relationship between women and performance of the organization was found to still be questionable while representation has increased due to some external debates and unions maybe because of the fact that the boards chiefly supervise and give advice to executives and top managers who are mostly men. Specifically, it can be shown that roughly 15 percent of the board members in the top 500 companies of Fortune are women in the United States while women remain scarce at the top of Asian companies. The female board in Japan is too limited to represent just 1.4 percent. Furthermore, the top female managers in developed countries accounts for higher rates. The rates in Nordic countries have been almost from 27% to 32% against 34% to 43% in Australia, Britain, Canada, and the United States. It can be seen that global representation about the female board, executives and top managers still has a long way to go.

The UK performs well because the women on the board of every FTSE100 company. Women comprised 26 percent of the boards. However, the situations have been still not unfair. For example, 90% of the top positions in FTSE100 companies, or trade unions would not be available for women. There are also obvious gaps of payments that exist between women and men in the same position. The 75% women work in the five sectors with the lowest payments according to a report of the BBC. It has been reported that the payment gap should be at 19% between men and women in the UK.

#### **V. THE APPROACHES OF THE UK'S ORGANIZATIONS FOR LEARNING FROM JAPANESE MANAGEMENT STYLE**

The Japanese management style could actually offer the helpful experience to improve the productivity of Britain organizations. But it should be accepted by suitable approaches according to the different environment and context. The executives should be care for to evaluate the effectiveness of the learning from the Japanese subsidiaries to check if it can be used in their own organizations. The following part demonstrate some processes to get the Japanese management methods.

##### *A. The Identifying of the Suitable Experiences*

It is important to identify why and how Japanese management methods come to be accepted and even preferred by British employees. Moreover, there are equally important

questions to be posed about the technical effectiveness of Japanese management style. It is necessary to look at the more detailed management practices and consider how these fit into an overall system of organization operating to answer the questions. It is only necessary to identify the illogical management style just like the Britain Mangers have frequently been advised to delegate more or not to get access into the detail to find the answers of previous questions. The behavior of the managers and supervisors in the Japanese firms appeared to run directly counter to such advice. They spent a large amount of time on the specific operating which were very involved in detail, and either lacked a clear chain of command, or often ignored the levels. It can be seen in the Japanese subsidiaries quite likely that a problem-solving huddle involving some senior manager. The behavioral patterns can be technically effective in the management of organizations.

##### *B. The Aims of the Japanese Operating*

Specifically, there are three aims can be seen in these behaviors. Firstly, it can improve the already smooth operating system. Then the direct participation in operations with managers could short the response-time to unscheduled events or problems. Lastly, the workers should be encouraged to pursue high quality standards.

The smoothness of the operating system is immediately visible for the organizations. For example, housekeeping is excellent, intermediate stocks small or non-existent, financial situation is good. In addition, there is little sign of the clutter which typically arises from mis-scheduled errors, faulty documentation or the other avoidable mistakes of operating systems. Management's concern for short response-times in these companies would be an important way to ignore snag to keep the production running smoothly. The snag, what in British terms indicates an obsession with small problems, may therefore have considerable affections on the full use of machine capacity and the productivity of workers. The third aim, which is the pursuit of quality, would be agreed by all Japanese management systems. It is well-known that Japanese companies tend to have little interest in Western notions of tradeoffs between quality and cost, nor in statistical sampling plans. Their approach about quality assurance is highly intensive and low-cost, which should be responsible by all participants included operators, supervisors and managers. In addition, continuous involvement in production is one of the ways in which management ensures that quality is pursued.

To sum up, the Japanese management style has gone further than just behavioral science categories such as "task-centered" and indicates the need for much more thorough analysis of the content of management working practices, not only in Japan but in the British subsidiaries. It would be able to understand the full significance of different practices for the technical effectiveness of management systems when the managers have a much better idea of detailed management action and day-to-day decision making.

#### **VI. CONCLUSION**

The specific Japanese management styles have been over-emphasis sometimes even they have existed in many sectors of

many developed nations. Some firms with the management styles have also in hard situation because of another reasons. The British management are technically less effective than the Japanese style in the given environment. Therefore, the British business management style would be affected by the Japanese approach learned from the Japanese subsidiaries located in the Great Britain. However, it might be predicated too strongly on the performances of British firms with Japanese management paradigm. The article has shown that the views about implementing management of Japanese and British managers would be different due to different cultures. The operating managers should accept another experience after a comprehensive consideration and to learn how staff from the other cultures identify their habits.

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