

EE463 GLOBALIZATION AND INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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Japanese Educational System and Its Contribution toward Post-war Success and
Development of Japan

GROUP 1

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Good discussion on the background and issues as well as govt strategies/policies. In the lesson learned and conclusion, please make sure that the elements flow from the discussions from previous sections.

In the reference section pls. make sure that the format is consistent.

What we've learned

Japan has shown that in every situation, in every problem, there will always be a way out. It just depends on the ruling power if they can figure it out or not. In this research paper, we've encountered several problems Japan has faced, from the post-war crisis, to aging society. The government will somehow find a way out to provide the best they can to future generations.

Let's first talk about the post-war crisis, since Japan has lost the war, and was, at one point, under the control of their rival, the USA. They've stood against the full-reform of Japanese education and adapted their own policies to what the US suggested, such as bringing back the "Shushin", or moral education, after the abolition by the American policymakers, and implementing it as a new educational statement replacing the old concept of Imperial Rescript. This change that happens ^{ed} during the baby boomer era allows many Japanese to experience the education system that is dubbed successful, but skillless.

Apart from students turned labor being skillless, students also have to compete against other students for a seat in a top university, which almost by default, ^S allow them to have better jobs. The entrance test was so important, it was even compared to being married. This favors the firm as it means that they will guarantee a highly educated labor once they graduate. However, during the course of the university, students also have to endure ineffective, impractical lectures, and boring curricula, ^S making them stand for themselves and protest against the government for an education reform.

After the student ^S took a stand against the government, education was reformed once again in 1970, where teachers will receive a higher wage, and students get a student-centered education. As seen ⁱⁿ nowadays, ^{the} Japanese economy has not only recovered, but became one of the most stable economies in the world, standing by the US, United Kingdom, China, and Europe's economy.

To sum it up, every problem is a challenge for everyone, especially the Japanese government that had to do something that would affect not just the near future, but over the next 30-40 years. They've come up with effective and efficient solutions, by putting corruption aside, and exempting fees that parents have to pay for education, raising the teacher's wage and allowing students to be the main focus in education. Not just to show that they can recover, but to show the world, that they can be one of the best.

Overview

During World War II, the ^Aallied power ^Sinitiated an attack on Japan, which resulted in Japan surrendering. The action consequently left the country and its economy devastated.

During the post-war years, Japan faced multiple financial issues, one including the salaries for teachers which were one of the most important problems. With the effect of inflation, salaries for teachers were considered as one of the biggest burdens on the local government financing.

During this time, fixed numbers of educational personnel were also reduced. This happened due to the fact that the local government treasuries were in dire circumstances and the fact that there was no specific law that focuses on the national standards concerning class size and fixed numbers of educational personnel. Moreover, Japan faces financial difficulties in the construction of school buildings. This was considered a serious matter as there were no carefully well made plans about school building constructions. For example, the lower secondary schools under the new school system ~~in this case~~ experienced a hard time, where they suffered a serious shortage of facilities since there had been no equivalents of lower secondary schools under the old system. This overall shows us that during the post-war years, Japan's level of education has decreased, both in terms of quantity and quality. To improve the situation, Japan officials have begun to work on many different methods to improve the situation. Focusing on a series of laws, the authorities authorized the national treasury to help fund / subsidize the cost of educational facilities in which the facilities were then enacted and receive necessary resources. In 1958, various systems of the national treasury funded educational facilities. This was brought together by the enactment of the Law Concerning the National Treasury's Share of Compulsory School Construction. Therefore, this resulted in an increase of public school facilities which are able to carry out / run efficiently thanks to the support system of the national treasury.

After the post-war economic rehabilitation, the Japanese economy experienced ^{the} state of rapid growth. During this stage, the Japanese education grew rapidly in size throughout the country and accomplished new development improving its education, both in quality and quantity. Therefore, this resulted in an expansion of the scale of upper secondary school education. By the 1970's, Japan had more than 90 percent of the age cohort enrolled in upper secondary schools. More importantly, these secondary schools became diversified. This means that guidance was given in terms of abilities and students are also introduced to varieties of courses, which help expand the range of alternatives in elective courses depending on their decision. In addition, ~~jobs such as~~ ^{courses} full-time ~~courses~~ and part-time ^{courses} were set up in order to ensure the opportunities primarily for working youth and adults to participate in upper secondary school education. This later on resulted in the youth being prepared for real life jobs. As for younger kids, the standards for kindergarten were also set

higher in 1956. These are separated into categories such as class size, facilities and equipment in running the facilities. Since 1964, series of the Promotional Plan of Kindergarten Education were also implemented, in which advancement of enrollment is established, with the objective that all 4- and 5-year-olds who wish to attend kindergartens could do so by the year 1982.

Japan eventually focuses^d on improving their education qualitatively than quantitatively. From the 1950's through the early 1960's, measures have been taken in order to improve educational conditions as both elementary / secondary education experiences intensive quantitative growth. In addition, equality of educational opportunities throughout the country also has greatly increased. (While the fact that quantitative growth continued on one hand, another problem arose which is in terms of quality of school education. In order to solve this issue, in 1967, the Central Council for Education was questioned by the Minister of Education, Science and Culture for advice on improvement of school education in the future. The Council made decisions over the next four years and eventually submitted a report in 1971. This report mentioned three points as focusing on elementary and secondary education reform. (1) careful selection of the content of education and appropriate instruction responding to the level of development and the character of individuals, (2) the promotion of long-range and well-planned educational policies, and (3) the promotion of drastic and comprehensive policies for securing excellent teachers.

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In addition, the report also recommended basic framework for elementary and secondary education reform, showing us the development of a school system. In this case, we have guidelines talking about the development process of children, correlation between improvement of curricula which reflect the characteristics of school levels, the improvement of methods of education reflecting the characteristics of individuals, training for high quality teachers, measurement taken to promote research in educational reform, etc. The report had become the guidelines for reforms which the policies implemented helped the education system greatly as this causes improvement among fixed numbers of educational personnel as well as improving the salaries of teachers.

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Identification of Key Issues

Japanese authorities evidently acknowledged the importance of education in recovering and developing after the war. As said by Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone, to make Japan full of vitality and creativity as it should be in the 21st century, securing education is necessary for social and cultural development. The matter had been raised for two major times: in the 1870s, by the new Meiji government as a response to colonisation, and after WWII, aiming to transform Japan from a military dictatorship to a democracy nation. Even though the purposes underlying the two education reforms were different, they, especially the latter one, result in the same manner: pacing Japan to be one of the most developed, innovative, and progressed nations in the world. The adaptation corresponded with political, economic, and social characteristics of Japan in a specific period. Its progress is explained as follows. ✓

The Occupation of Japan refers to a period after WWII when the Allies, led by the US, saw that the prewar success of Japan was due to a strong educational system as a result of the Meiji Restoration. However, the path was cut as Japan was severely hurt after WWII with the vast majority of schools and textbooks, technically unable to use as they were intensively propagated misleading nationalism, were destroyed. Students and teachers were suffering from poverty and post-war trauma. Thus, after Japan's widely seen commitment to peace, the Allies planned for a new educational system to continue Japan's prosper pace, aiming to build the nation as a strong democratic country. However, the American policymakers wanted to decentralise the power held by the Ministry of Education and transfer it to local schools, transform orientation of pre-war Japanese people, suggest a "child-focused" system, and present a more flexible curriculum; in other words, they expected to change Japan into the US. The process was tough and took many years to be effective. Before the withdrawal of American control in Japan, democratic values, modern educators, new curricula, and Teachers' Union were left in a new democratic-hostile Japan. ✓

After the period, the Japanese government closely speculated, analysed, and adjusted its educational system. The reassessment resulted in a large number of American-initiated reforms being modified to fit Japanese traditions and values. "Shushin", or moral education, was brought back after the abolition by the American policymakers, and was implemented as a new educational statement replacing the old concept of Imperial Rescript. This action massively results in the sense of nationalism of Japanese people to the present time. This process of counter-reformation got a positive reaction from the private sector. Some said that the American ways those policymakers left in the country was incompatible with Japanese cultures and traditions, and that those foreigners tried to transform Japan into something else. The change happened at the same period as the rise of "baby boomers", meaning that a large number of Japanese citizens were educated in this new system. The

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government also gave easier access to higher levels of education and expanded more educational opportunities for children in general. 99.98 percent of people completed the 9-year compulsory education. 94.2 percent continued their academic career in secondary schools. One of the predominant effects is an economic revival in the 1950s, followed by high economic growth in the 1960s and early 1970s. The Ministry of Education then declared four 5-year plans. Mainly, the plans were designed to increase effectiveness of post war education and provide higher levels of education in mathematics and sciences. Minor revisions were operated by the International Survey of Education Achievement (IEA). Nevertheless, despite Japan's glorious success in education, education among women still remained low.

Japan's politics, economics, and society were shaken from time to time due to many international events such as the Korean War, and the First Oil Shock. Thus, the educational system in the 1960s to 1970s was delicately crafted to be resilient and economically-friendly. The private sector, once again, took part in this process. Many firms saw that the prewar multitrack educational system allowed them to expand workers-base by procuring workforce from different backgrounds and skills. The new education path, however, is straight and forward-focused, but narrow and non-diverse at the same time. Classifying schools by rank established a hierarchy among universities. It immensely put pressure on the prospectus students to intensively focus on studying, but not obtaining other necessary skill along the way. In other words, in spite of the noticeable shape development in education in Japan, firms still complain about the quality of graduates entering the workforce. Besides, the impressive increase in economic growth of Japan provided more opportunities and incentive for younger generations in rural areas to continue higher formal education. This factor also put more pressure on the Japanese government to adjust the educational system again. The government then released the "Report on the Long-Range Educational Plan Oriented toward Doubling of Income." In 1960, arguing that better science and technical education is necessary to meet the private sector's demand. Many new curriculums in various industries including merchant marine were introduced. Many specialised technicians and scientists were produced at that time, which resulted in technology and innovation development in Japan. The importance of secondary education was also raised as a critical factor in human development. As a result, the number of secondary schools was relatively much bigger than the one of universities. University examination ^{was} even compared to getting married as they both refer to the most competitive and serious event in human's life. This fierce and rigorous competition had been raised many times. Still, the process was normalised in Japan as it also coincided with the Confucian legacy and ancient Chinese scholar examination. Also, many sectors, especially the firms, favour the situation as it automatically extracted the best of the best scholars in Japanese educational system and delivered them to the firms.

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But not until 1968, when students, finding boring curricula, unpractical lectures, and conservative professors disappointing, protested in the prestigious and famous Tokyo University. The incident closed university for several months and suspended the latter year's entrance examination. After many difficulties and challenges between the government and students, their needs were met.

In the late 1970s, a new educational framework was passed to modernise the Japanese system. The Central Council for Education claimed that the educational system of Japan was falling behind because the government merely wanted to protect the status quo regardless of the world situation. Thus, the third major educational reform was initiated. The proposals, despite being costly, improved quality of life and education of both the teachers and students. Teachers were provided with higher salary and increase in time available for teaching as paper was transferred to an expanded staff. New educational programmes, private universities and subsidiaries were supported. Practical measures, which evaluate students' personality development, were implemented through a more flexible and child-focused curriculum as a replacement of the old standardised and over-centralised control system. The importance of creativity was emphasised as well as the one of receptivity and imitation. After several years of adjustment, the new system seems to be fruitful as economic growth of Japan is skyrocketing with a large number of talented and well-educated workforce in various fields. Some even claim that Japan has successfully stepped out of a structural trap and eventually modernise the educational system. Students are still fiercely-competitive, but an increasing number of young people specialise in other careers but those in formal education shows a good sign. However, Japanese society is facing new challenges such as "school refusal syndrome", a problem which has to be further investigated in the future.

All in all, Japanese phenomenal success in building a strong educational system is a result of immense support and corporations of many sectors. The government did not blindly rely on the system founded by American policymakers. They continuously revise and change the plan according to the situations and the country's direction in each period. The firms always take part in supporting, commenting, and reflecting their needs and opinion toward the workforce and the system per se. The people also communicate their wants to the government as they see fit. As can be seen, the success does not happen incidentally, fast situation-revising and decision-making are necessary.

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Government Strategies

Japan's educational system is one of the most efficient systems in the world. But to further develop, Japanese government implements these strategies. Firstly, preparing young

people for the future is significant since nowadays, Japan faces an aging population. Schools need to prepare students for jobs that have not yet been created, technologies that have not yet been invented and problems that have not yet been anticipated. Therefore, the curriculum for students and teachers needs to be reformed. Teachers will need systematic training and professional help. In addition to giving knowledge, they must include developing cross-curricular skills, such as problem-solving and creativity, and good learning habits to the students. Secondly, teachers should sustain holistic education, meaning that overall students must be engaged and work collaboratively with each other, although Japanese teachers' average working hours are really high compared to those of other countries. Last strategy is to strengthen the lifelong learning and skills system. Japan's plan for the Promotion of Education (2018-2022) includes the priorities of ensuring the universal mission of education and providing better opportunities for all people through education while also aiming to solve issues based on its progress and concerns in anticipation of social changes beyond 2030. It established targets and set measures to help students develop the necessary skills to achieve their potential as well as lead sustainable development of society; promote lifelong learning and activities for all learners; build a learning safety net by which anyone can play an active role in supporting society and build the foundation to carry out these education policies (OECD, 2018[358]).

With Japanese governance, Japan made amendments to the Act on the Organisation and Operation of Local Educational Administration (2014) that regulates the boards of education in each local government. A revision of the law passed in 1956, aiming to increase the representation of local stakeholders' views in the design of local education policies. The amendments include that with the agreement of the local assembly, the local government head can designate a superintendent to lead the board of education, as well as is responsible for organising education meetings with the board of education members to discuss basic education policies to improve their local education system.

As Japan also focuses on funding strategy, Japan passed the Act on Free Tuition Fees at Public High Schools and High School Tuition Support Fund (2010) to ease family educational expenses and contribute to equal opportunity in upper secondary education. Low-income families still faced some degree of educational costs, including private upper secondary school fees. Therefore, the government decided to make further amendments to promote support for low-income families and correct the gap in educational costs between public and private schools. The 2014 revised system includes an increase of allowances to improve financial support to students from low-income families in private upper secondary schools. It also introduced new scholarship programmes for students from low-income

families to alleviate some financial obligations other than tuition costs, such as school trips and textbooks. The rate of students who leave high school halfway due to financial problems has steadily decreased from 2.9% in 2009 to 1.1% in 2017 (National information reported to the OECD).

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Conclusions

Japan itself is like other countries, where they suffer from the post-war financial crisis. However, their situation was more severe as they could not even afford to pay the wages for teachers, in addition to Japan having no specific laws on education, leaving the country's number of education levels to be on a downward trend, in both quality of the education itself, and the amount of people going to school. After the US had left ~~trails~~ trails of destruction behind, while also controlling the country's education system. Japanese government negotiated with the US and implemented a new education system that proved to be somewhat effective, as it led to a rapid recovery and a high economic growth for Japan for at least the next 10 years, however, it was only education where they focused, as firms in Japan complained about labor's lack of skills.

In 1960, Japan implemented a new education system that includes improved science and technological education, creating more, and better scientists and technicians during that time period. Which leads to a very high competition between students to get a good university education. Students, however, had different ideas and stood against the university's boring curricula, impractical lectures, and protested for changes. Which they've received in 1970, where, despite being costly, improved students and teacher's quality of life. Teachers get higher salaries, students now get practical measures that they can evaluate themselves, and curriculums are more focused on students rather than being centralised.

However, a new problem popped up, as Japan is now facing an aging population, where most of the people decide not to have kids. Japanese government sees the problem and implemented several strategies to prepare new generations for the future. By reforming education curriculums, preparing students for future jobs, technologies, and problems that do not exist just yet. Teachers now will also have to develop cross-curricular skills, implement good learning habits to students, collaborate more with students, and strengthen students' lifelong learning and skill system. Japan's main goal this time around is to provide better opportunities for all people, and aim to solve issues based on their social changes beyond 2030. The government stepped in and passed the Act on Free Tuition Fees at public high schools, to ease family's educational expenses, and contribute to the upper secondary education, while also correcting the wrong and promoting support for low-income families and reducing the gap between public and private school educations. This is to help students develop necessary skills, lead the country without disrupting the country's sustainable development, and allowing them to play a role in the society, no matter who they ended up being after graduating. Because after all, everyone's voice matters in the society.

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