LESSONS FROM EAST ASIA: A COMPARATIVE EVALUATION OF THE PHILIPPINE AND JAPANESE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEMS

Dr. Ishrat Naaz [1]

[1] *Professor, School of Education, Galgotias University, Uttar Pradesh, India*

Article Info	Abstract:
	This current paper evaluates the Philippine and Japanese educational systems. Both countries' educational systems aim to provide their pupils with a top-notch education. The goal of the Japanese educational system is to produce citizens who are aware of global trends. The Philippine educational system aims to provide pupils with the necessary knowledge to deal with obstacles in life and the outside world (Sevil, 2020). Filipinos place a high priority on education, and as a result, they have high literacy rates; however, this is not universal, unlike in Japan, where the entire population is educated (Mustary, 2018). This paper also highlighted how the Philippine education system can benefit from several characteristics of Japanese education, such as the emphasis on studying and the inclusion of integrated studies to link multiple topics and see the logic, boosting the possibility of learning. The researcher's goal is not only to compare and contrast the two systems but also to identify areas from which each country might benefit. *Keywords:* Comparative Evaluation, East Asia, Japanese and Philippine Educational Systems.

1. Introduction

In the sphere of knowledge-based societies and rapid globalisation, there is a growing need for high-quality training frameworks. Japan's educational framework has emerged as a developed provider of quality education. As an innovative country, Japan's instructional strategy is a "techno-nihilist" type (Ike, 1999). The Japanese school system is believed to be the longest, with 243 days, which is much longer than the 180 days in the United States. The Philippines Basic Education Curriculum has 200 days of work (Mustary, 2018). Following World War II, Japan's educational system underwent a significant overhaul under American influence (JICA, 2004; Cummings, 1980). The educational systems of Japan and the Philippines differ in numerous facets of education. While they are not identical, the Philippines and Japan share similar concerns about developing skills in their science curricula (Pawilen and Sumida, 2005).

The education system in the Philippines has deteriorated. Ten years of primary education before entering tertiary education was questioned. A new education system with K-12 reforms was proposed. However, due to the inertia of the Philippine government on education issues, there are still doubts about its success. To compare the education system of a developed and a developing country, i.e.,

Japan and the Philippines, the educational structure, the different levels of education, teacher training in administration, vocational training and the curriculum are comprehensively examined.

Objective

To study and compare the educational systems of Japan, a developed country, with the educational systems of the Philippines, a developing country.

The Educational Ideology of Japan and the Philippines

Education is a necessity for growing a person's character by enhancing one's individuality, increasing ability, gaining independence, and pursuing a happy life; at the same time, it begins on a mission to nurture the citizens who make up the country and society (Ike, 1997).
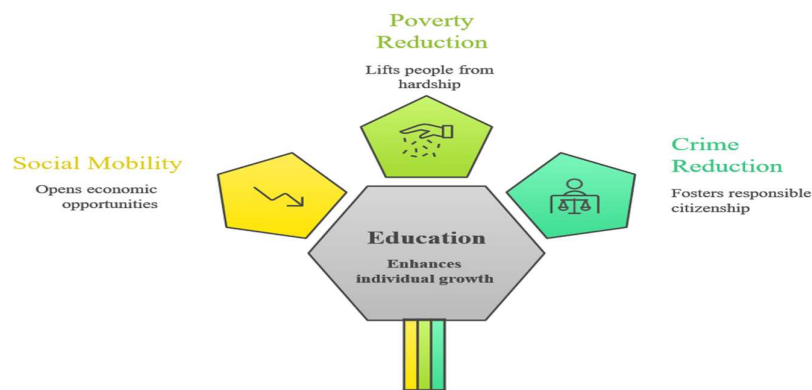

Figure 1: Education Drives Societal Mobility

The Japanese place a high value on education, which is why they have the highest literacy rates in the world (Grolier, 1990). In the Philippines, Filipinos have a strong view of education, which they regard as the major road to greater social and economic mobility. Due to their colonial authority, the Americans embodied the ideal of a democratic society in which individuals could advance through good educational achievement (Country Studies, n.d.). It might be assumed that Japan and the Philippines share the same viewpoint that education is the key to a country's future mobility. Education is at the heart of society, and it is no overstatement to claim that Japan's future is dependent on it, as the Ministry of Education of Japan states. This educational paradigm is not exclusive to Japan; it is also prevalent in the Philippines and other nations. In the Philippines, Filipinos regard education as the major road to greater social and economic mobility (Macha et al., 2018). Education has been studied as a means of lowering poverty, reducing crime, enhancing economic benefits, and ultimately raising the Filipino people's standard of living (Durban & Catalan, 2012).

2. Educational Curriculum of Japan and the Philippines

In Japan, the purpose of organising the educational process is to achieve the educational goals of local schools (Komatsu, 2002). This applies not only to Japanese schools but also to Filipino schools. Ministry of Education, whose director is from the Prime Minister's office, sets the curricula for primary, secondary and high school (Ike, 1997).

Table 1 shows the Japanese elementary school curriculum approved by the Board of Education of Tokyo's Shinjuku Ward

Elementary School Curriculum of Japan					
1st Grade	Japanese, Arithmetic, Music, Physical Education, Drawing and Construction, Classroom Activities, Ethics	Life Studies	*	*	*
2nd Grade					
3rd Grade		*	Social Studies, Science,		
4th Grade				Club Activities	Home Making, Committee Activities
5th Grade					
6th Grade					

In Japan, all students are taught Japanese, Arithmetic, Drawing and Construction, Music, Physical Education, classroom activities, and Ethics from grades 1st to 6th. (MEXT, 2011; Okamoto, 2001). From classes 1 to 2, life studies are taught. Social studies and science integrated studies (IS) begin in third grade, and instructors are required to perform activities that encourage creativity to cultivate students' living capacities. The fourth grade is when club activities are introduced (MEXT, 2011).

Table 2 is the Japanese Junior High School Curriculum as defined by the Shinjuku Ward Board of Education in Tokyo.

Table 2. Junior High/middle school curriculum in Japan

SUBJECT	
Required/Compulsory Subjects	**Electives**
Japanese	Japanese Mathematics Social Studies Music Science Art Technology & Homemaking Health & Physical Education Foreign language
Mathematics	
Social Studies	
Music	
Science	
Art	
Technology & Homemaking	
Health & Physical Education	

Foreign language (English)	
Ethics	
Period for integrated study	
Special Activities (classroom activities)	

Electives, which pupils can choose from, are added to the junior high school curriculum. Electives, on the other hand, offer more specialised courses beyond compulsory subjects. However, Integrated studies (IS) from elementary continue to this level (Okamoto, 2001).

Math, science, English, Filipino, and social sciences are key courses in the Philippines, with music, arts, physical education, and health as optional topics (Classbase, n.d.). Music, arts, PE, and health are meant to be somewhat in opposition to the Japanese system, where the stated electives are mandatory; however, the Philippines treats them as choices only (Pawilen & Sumida, 2005). Secondary education comprises 4 grades that have been changed since World War II (Classbase, n.d).

Table 3 shows the school curriculum in Japan

SUBJECT	
Required/Compulsory Subjects	**Electives**
Mathematics	
Science	Music
English	Arts
Social Sciences	Health & Physical Education
Filipino	

Educational Structure of Japan and the Philippines

The structure is the central component of every educational system of schools. It is the foundation on which the arrangement of schools is erected. Several of the most pertinent school characteristics are detailed by the structure, such as school entry age, compulsory education, duration of various school levels, subordination of the system and internal correlations. The contents of curricula, syllabi, and even textbooks depend on the structure.

Primary Education (Shogakko): In Japan, a total of 9 years of compulsory education forms the structure of the education system in schools, in which 6 years) provided by primary schools (Shogakko) applicable for ages 6 to 12 from grade 1-6 and lower secondary education of 3 years. Japanese, social studies, arithmetic, science, life studies (a blend of social studies and science, only

provided in Grades 1 and 2), arts and crafts, homemaking, physical education, and life studies make up the curriculum at this point. Moral education receives a lot of attention.

In the Philippines, attending school is required for six years. There are two cycles in the primary school system: the four-year Primary Cycle, which covers grades 1-4 for students in grades 6–11, and the Intermediate Cycle, which covers grades 5-7 for students in grades 11–13. The six primary school grades cover the following fundamental subjects: science, mathematics, health, and language arts (Pilipino, English, and Local Dialect). In grades 1-3, civics and culture are also taught. In grades 4-6, students study social studies, music and art, physical education, home economics, and livelihood. Values education and the teaching of "good manners and right conduct" are integrated into all academic areas. All elementary school students are also introduced to Makabayan, a learning environment that functions as a practice setting for holistic learning and a place where students develop a strong sense of personal and national identity. (Macha, Mackie, and Magaziner, 2018).

Secondary Education*:* In Japan, children enter middle school at the age of twelve. The fact that roughly 96% of children who complete middle school intend to continue their education explains this. As a result, the middle school's main concentration is on preparing for the high school entrance exam. In Japan, around 95% of pupils attend state-funded schools, while about 5.7% attend private schools. In a typical class, there are around 40 pupils. In comparison to primary school, the middle school curriculum involves an integrated study to encourage students' creativity and individuality. Secondary education is a type of education that takes place (Kotogakko). High school in Japan is not compulsory and, what is more, it is not free. Despite this, nearly 94% of students continue their education by enrolling in privately funded or state-owned institutions. High school begins when pupils reach the age of 15 and finishes until they reach the age of 18. After ninth grade, Japanese pupils are divided into two groups: vocational and university admission. Secondary education is also divided into three types: full-time, part-time, and correspondence. The primary goal of secondary school is to prepare students to apply for university admission.

In the Philippines, secondary education is not compulsory. There are two basic categories of regular secondary schools: secondary schools and vocational secondary schools. Vocational high schools are primarily concerned with vocational education, practical arts, and trades. Agriculture, fishing, trade/technical, non-traditional courses, and home industry with a variety of specialities are the most common technical and vocational courses offered by these high schools. Secondary schooling lasts four years, from grades 7 to 10, and begins at the age of 12 or 13 and ends at the age of 16 or 17. The curriculum varies depending on the type of school attended.

Higher Education*:* Universities, junior colleges (undergraduate), graduate schools, colleges of technology, professional training institutes, and educational institutions run by government ministries

and organisations provide higher education in Japan. Bachelor's, Master's, and doctoral degrees are available at universities (daigakku). Junior colleges offer professional-focused educational programmes that lead to an associate degree, whereas colleges of technology accept lower-level high school graduates into their 5-year professional-focused programmes. 1–4-year practical courses are available at specialised training colleges.

In the Philippines, higher education is divided into three levels: bachelor's, master's, and doctoral. Bachelor's degree programmes last at least four years. The first two years are for general education courses, and the last two years are for the student's major subjects. Agriculture, pharmacy, and engineering are just a few of the bachelor's degree disciplines that take five years to finish. Full-time master's degree programmes last two years and include a minor thesis or comprehensive examination. A few professional degrees, such as medicine and law, require a bachelor's degree as a prerequisite. These programmes, on the other hand, last significantly longer than the typical two years of study.

Vocational and Technical Education: Vocational courses are offered in Japanese in upper secondary specialised training schools (koto senshu gakko) and technological colleges. Engineering, business, and agriculture are just a few of the professions covered by upper-secondary specialised training schools. Colleges of Technology courses are more specialised and in-depth than those offered by upper secondary specialised schools.

Professional degree programmes in areas such as medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine, and law in the Philippines are either post-graduate programmes requiring a bachelor's degree or extensive six-year first-degree programmes requiring two years of foundation study following high school. Crafts, secretarial studies, business studies, fisheries, interior and fashion design, hotel and restaurant management, technical trades, agriculture, and technical education are just a few of the disciplines offered by technical and vocational schools and institutions. A certificate (also referred to as a Certificate of Proficiency) or a diploma are awarded to students who complete vocational and technical programmes. The Professional Regulation Commission of the Philippines oversees 38 distinct professions and administers their various licencing exams.

Teacher Education: The Japanese teacher education programme emphasises devoting ample attention to the most important subjects (Komatsu, 2002). Value-based and pragmatic approaches are used in core disciplines. Teacher certification is governed by "well-regulated guidelines" (Ingersoll et al., PISA, NCEE, OECD Activity, Yamamoto et al, 2016), Yamasaki, H (2016). A student must have a Bachelor's degree and credits in the disciplines specified in the Educational Personnel Certification Law to qualify for and get a teacher certificate from a university or college. A student earns a teacher certificate from the concerned prefectural board of education, which has the authority to issue teacher certificates, after acquiring certain credentials.

A four-year bachelor's degree is the basic teaching certificate in the Philippines. The Commission on Higher Education (CHED) establishes curricula that include general education, education-related topics, specialist subjects, and practice teaching (Sevil, 2020). Complete a post-graduate programme in education if you have a bachelor's degree in another discipline and want to become a teacher (Certificate of Professional Education) (Sevil, 2020).

3. Administration of Education in Japan and the Philippines

The Ministry of Education, Science, Sports, and Culture (commonly abbreviated as the Ministry of Education) is Japan's central educational authority, in charge of all educational matters. The ministry decides on the creation of new educational institutions and sets the budgets for all national educational institutions, as well as funding for private universities. Each prefecture's education committee or governor establishes primary and high schools. A handful of research organisations are also under the ministry's direct supervision. The Japanese education system is organised in a centralised manner. MEXT releases guidelines for the national primary, secondary, and upper secondary school curricula. Education is in charge of teacher education programmes. A municipal board of education is in charge of education administration at the local level. The minister of education is aided by several advisory committees. The most important is the Central Council for Education, which was founded in 1952 to research educational improvements.

Three main government agencies are responsible for education in the Philippines. All areas of elementary, secondary, and informal education are overseen by the Department of Education. It is in charge of both public and private elementary and secondary schools. Technical and vocational education and training in the Philippines is overseen by the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA).

TESDA is a regulatory authority that monitors both public and private TVET providers and works as a standard-setter for training, curricula, and testing for vocational programmes. The Commission on Higher Education is the primary governing body in tertiary education (CHED). Its tasks include creating and executing higher education policy as well as providing quality assurance through its oversight of both public and private post-secondary programmes and institutions. establishes minimal standards for academic programmes and the creation of new higher education institutions, determines how public HEIs can use these monies and proposes funding levels for them.

Issues in the Educational System in Japan and the Philippines

46% of Japanese secondary school graduates went on to a 2-year junior high school or a 4-year university (Schools and Educational Plans) in 1996. For Japanese students, having a verifiable level

of education, such as a high school diploma or a college diploma, is critical because education directly impacts their impending profession, and the reputation of a college determines students' future business opportunities. As a result, there is a lot of hostility to getting into prestigious institutions, which has a lot of negative implications for Japanese secondary school students. The lack of innovativeness, opportunity, and future vision of the understudy are three of the most important difficulties (Akihisa, 2012).

To start with, pupils are not encouraged to be creative in the Japanese educational system. This is primarily because university entrance exam requirements are regulated. In Japan, a student's eligibility for a university is decided by the results of entrance exams rather than by their high school performance. The high school curriculum consequently overemphasises memory. Students have little time for other activities like class discussions, experiments or presentations, which are all meant to be a part of their education, because they are so focused on mastering certain methods to do well on entrance examinations. Second, there isn't much autonomy for students. It could be because high school tasks and tests are so abundant. The third year of high school, or grade 12 in Canada, is the most usual year. Weekends are scarce because students appear for exams virtually every week.

Schooling may be a tense and stressful experience, because failure to get into the correct school, or kindergarten, can jeopardise one's adult employment possibilities, as the Japanese youth claim. In short, in contrast to Filipino youth, Japanese young take learning seriously because it influences their later employment (Ike, 1999).

Elementary and junior high school students are free in the evenings to teach themselves or "cram" at evening schools, or juku, in the hopes of improving their performance on college entrance exams (Akihisa, 2012). This is in contrast to the Philippines, where students never go to evening schools to study and cram. It is assumed that Japanese students are under pressure from their studies to the point where they must cram at night rather than stay at home, leading to the so-called "examination wars," as well as the enactment of the yutorikyoiku policy, as stated by Akihisa (2012), which improved student performance and may reduce cramming.

Ultimately, pupils in Japan lack a sense of the future as a result of the educational system. Instructor pressure is one of the main causes. The proportion of students who enrol in college, especially at elite universities, directly affects the school's standing. The higher a high school's reputation, the more students it will attract to prestigious institutions. Consequently, more students will submit applications to high school. Because of this, educators usually have more interest in pushing students to attend prestigious universities than they do in concentrating on their long-term career goals. Students are unable to form a clear vision of their future due to the demands placed on them by their teachers.

Bullying in Japan is known as *Ijime,* and it differs from bullying in the Western world, where it is caused by psychological brutality. 80 per cent of *Ijime* is "collective" violence (Zhao et al., 2010), in which the victim is pitted against the entire class, and 90 per cent of Ijime incidents are protracted, lasting a week or more (This Japanese Life, 2013). According to Flores (2014) remarks in a news article that violence takes numerous forms: Peer-to-peer bullying includes acts of physical aggression, psychological punishment, sexual harassment, bullying among classmates, and gender discrimination. As far as the Philippines is concerned, the colonial past of the Philippines, which encompasses the Spanish, American, and Japanese periods of rule and occupation, has had a significant impact on the country's educational system. The most profound and impactful changes to the educational system occurred during the American occupation (1898), even though all of its invaders had a significant impact. First and foremost, there is the issue of educational quality. The National Career Assessment Examination (NCAE) and National Achievement Test (NAT) scores from 2014 reveal that the quality of Philippine education at the elementary and secondary levels has deteriorated (Durban & Catalan, 2012). In both the 2014 NAT and NCAE, the students' performance was much below the goal mean score. The money for education is the second difficulty that the Philippine educational system encounters. Although the Philippine Constitution requires the government to devote the greatest amount of its budget to education. Among ASEAN countries, the Philippines continues to have one of the lowest education budget allocations (Macha et al., 2018). Students from low-income households have much higher primary school dropout rates (Macha et al., 2018). The third challenge that the Philippine educational system is constantly confronted with is the cost of education (or lack thereof). Educational achievement varies significantly throughout different social groups. Students from high- and low-income households experiencing poverty, also referred to as students from socioeconomically challenged homes, have much higher primary school dropout rates. Furthermore, at the tertiary level, the majority of freshmen students come from quite well-off families. The gap between the educational preparation needed for a career and the real requirements of the job is substantial. This is a major issue at the postsecondary level and the cause of the prolonged unemployment or underemployment of many educated individuals. Teachers, desks and chairs, textbooks, classrooms, and audio-visual resources are among the many facilities in limited supply in Philippine public schools (Macha et al., 2018; Department of Education, 2003).

Foreigners in Japanese education are a common occurrence in Japan. According to Yamamoto (2014), immigrants' marginal status as gaijin has an impact on Japanese students' perceptions of immigrant students and their interactions with them. This means that immigrant students in Japan are considered as outcasts by native Japanese students and are frequently bullied, something that does not happen in the Philippines.

4. Conclusion

The Japanese value education highly, resulting in a highly literate population. Although they have a solid education system, its homogeneity has caused it to fail, especially for foreigners.

The researcher's goal is not only to compare and contrast the educational systems of the Philippines and Japan but also to identify parts of each system from which each country might benefit. Filipinos place a great priority on education, and as a result, they have high literacy rates; however, only in select places, as opposed to Japan, where the whole population is educated. Bullying among immigrants is common in Japan, but not so in the Philippines. Filipinos never have to compete in "exam wars" to get into college, and they are more welcoming to newcomers than Japanese people. The Philippine education system can benefit from several characteristics of Japanese education, such as the emphasis on studying and the inclusion of integrated studies to link multiple topics and see logic, which can boost the possibility of learning.

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