

4.2. The true core of Japanese management - A statistical analysis (Balázs Vaszkun and Ágnes Szukits)

4.2.1. Introduction

Studying the management characteristics specific to Japanese corporations is crucial due to their deep roots in unique cultural values and their significant global influence, particularly in industries like automotive and electronics. Japanese practices such as ‘*kaizen*’, ‘lean manufacturing’, and ‘just-in-time’ production have shaped global business strategies, offering lessons in efficiency and innovation from the 1970s. Understanding these characteristics aids in comparative management studies, improves international business relations, and enhances global management strategies. Additionally, Japan's distinctive human resource practices and its role as a major global economy make its management style an essential area of study for fostering better communication, collaboration, and competitiveness in the global market.

We can define Japanese-style management as a set of practices, cultural principles, and organisational strategies that have evolved in Japan, especially prominent in the post-World War II era. Indeed, one of the most widely examined, most thoroughly researched topic amongst national corporate management styles is definitely the J-style or Japanese-style management (Fukuda, 2010; Pudelko, 2009; Raj Adhikari & Hirasawa, 2010) without actually explaining thoroughly what such term could mean. Literature abounds in sources examining how Japan became “Number One” (Vogel, 1979), and then why it suddenly lost its stunning performance (Hayashi & Prescott, 2002). Two fascinating stories with all kinds of variations and some still ongoing debate about Japan’s transformation versus its “lost decades”. Yet, despite the amount of academic work done so far, it is still difficult to define or describe in a compact manner what we understand under the term “Japanese Management”. In our approach, it is neither just the Toyota Production System, nor the so-called three “pillars” (being lifelong employment, seniority and company-based unions), but something more complex. Therefore, answering this question certainly needs a model with the various aspects of corporate management (structure) and some content for each aspect. As one of the various model-building attempts made previously, Nakagawa (1983) stated that the term “Japanese management” does not have any explicit and precise meaning: for him, it is a “general term for many practices which seem unique to Japanese business management, but which are – taken one by one – not necessarily unique to this country at all.” (1)

In the following section, we will review a significant part of the academic sources on attempts to construct the complex model needed for a thorough analysis. Given that we could not clearly identify a framework complex enough or a model comprehensive enough to list all distinctive features of Japanese management, we explain the research design leading us to such a framework.

4.2.2. Literature review

One approach to describe the Japanese management system could be historical, i.e. the revision of its evolution since the Meiji industrialization up to the recent economic and social challenges (Vaszkun & Tsutsui, 2012). Management in large Japanese companies certainly differed in the late 19th century from the militaristic 1930s, from the high-speed growth of the 1950s and '60s, and again from the post-Bubble era, especially from the 2000s. This approach remains always theoretical, however, and our second objective was to compare the dominant management theory with the current attitudes of people in Japan. As for the “dominant” or currently mainstream management theory, it seemed appropriate to call back for the management practices and philosophy between the 1970s and the late-1990s.

The structure of the theoretical model is also an important question. Liker, Fruin and Adler (1999) defined the Japanese management system as composed of four layers: (1) Shop floor production systems; (2) Factory organization and management; (3) Corporate structure and systems; and (4) Institutional environment. We found that this may be a good approach to see Japanese management in its complexity but it is difficult to clearly distinguish the content of the layers. For instance, layer 2 contains human resource practices whereas human resource policies are said to be at layer 3. Also, it is not clear whether we can categorize supplier networks as layer 2 or 3.

Richard Pascale and Anthony Athos (1981) claimed that executives can influence complex organizations with seven levers of management functions: superordinate goals, strategy, structure, systems, staff, skills, and style. The structural logic of their model calls for the contingency theory, used mostly for examining “fit” in organizations in order to enhance managerial performance. According to various advocates of the contingency theory, one can make a thorough analysis of large organizations along the following structure: one should examine the characteristics of the external environment and the intra-organizational context first, then match with these all elements of structure,

strategy, organizational behaviour, and performance (Lee & Miller, 1996; Vaszkun, 2012). We have found no clear answer in literature enabling us to identify all distinctive characteristics of Japanese management, so we The theory of contingency proved to be relevant enough to describe management from various perspectives and complex enough to enable us to make a comprehensive study on the national patterns of management in Japan.

4.2.3. Research design and methodology

Based on the literature on Japanese management in Vaszkun (2012), we have listed every distinctive characteristics of Japanese-style management and grouped these along the main dimensions of the contingency theory (environment, intra-organizational context, structure, strategy, behavioural elements and performance. Thus, we came to the list of 30 identifiable elements (see in Table 1) of the Japanese-style management. Our compilation of business practices provides readers with the most significant dimensions from literature highlighting specificities of the J-style management. However, a model with a total of 30 variables needs to be finetuned and simplified in order to efficiently describe national management characteristics. The number of variables needed to be reduced.

Table 1: The main features of J-style management based on literature

Environment	
1. A small living area with frequent catastrophes	HR / OB / Employment philosophy
2. Collectivist culture, Confucianism	18. Recruitment from schools
3. Historical isolation, late industrialization	19. Core (permanent) vs. “irregular” staff
4. Developmental state and protected markets	20. Long-term employment
5. An economy with continuous growth	21. Formal induction, creating a family
6. An ambiguous and rigid labour market	22. Cohort training “on-the-job”
Intra-organizational context	23. Slow promotion
7. Easy-to-train and devoted employees	24. Rotation
8. Superiors are more managers than leaders	25. Seniority pay (tenure-based compensation)
9. Male dominance, homogeneity	26. Enterprise-based or company unions
Strategy	Control & Performance
10. Stakeholder orientation	27. Behaviour-based control
11. Cost leadership (vs. product differentiation)	28. No direct control, multi-monitoring
12. Spin-offs, start-ups, diversified portfolios	29. Decisions are joint responsibility
Structure	30. Good performance: market share, harmony...
13. Big and complex, U-form based group hierarchy	
14. Large boards dominated by insiders	

15. Central HRM, prevails over finance	
16. Processes of decision making: a consensual approach	
17. Working teams (open office, group seating...)	

Source: Vaszkun (2012)

In order to reduce the number of dimensions, we needed to operationalize these elements and develop them into quantitative data. We have paired all these features collected from the literature with an attitude (positive or negative). Thus, we transformed the list of 30 identifiable elements of the Japanese-style management into an attitude survey described by Vaszkun (2024).

Regarding the connection between attitudes and management practices, we must also note that attitudes suggest a tendency to act on a specific way. The theory of reasoned action originally from 1975 posited that attitudes lead toward behavioural intentions (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2015). Drawing on this idea, several studies proved the correlation between attitudes and behavioural intention (Becker & Gibson, 1998; Oskamp & Schultz, 2005; Tonglet et al., 2004; Vining & Ebreo, 1992). This theoretical approach has a strong potential in predicting behaviour under specific circumstances. Marketing researchers willingly use this attitude-intention relationship for prediction of consumer behaviour as well (Abayomi et al., 2020; Lorenzo-Romero et al., 2011; Oyedele et al., 2007).

In order to raise the validity of the survey, we have phrased every feature in different ways so that with 67 sentences or questionnaire items (see in Appendix), the measurement could be more precise. This survey could serve our main objectives: which are the practices that matter the most for Japanese society regarding management in the 21st century. The survey has been a good instrument to identify potential patterns or main variables behind the list of 67 items and that of the 30 variables.

The questionnaire

Following a test phase, our final questionnaire was uploaded to the SurveyMonkey website. 880 respondents answered it online between March, 2010 (start of the test phase) and August, 2010 (last data collected). The survey was conducted in Japan, in Japanese, so respondents did not have to be English-speakers.

Although the aim of the research was to reflect the opinion of Japan's society as a whole, some key target groups were designated for the questionnaire in order to ensure meaningful data. Three groups were targeted: managers representing practitioners, a

potentially dominant group at present; professors in BA, MA, or MBA-level business programs representing the academic experts, the other potentially dominant group at present; and business students representing the potentially dominant group for the future. In parallel, control opinions were to be collected from other, diverse categories, with the aim of having respondents from different hierarchical levels, different locations, different nationalities, with balanced gender and age cohorts.

In the sample obtained, there is good balance of gender (51.6% male, 48.4% female). Respondents range from 19 to 74 years old and the highest tenure is 42 years in the same company. For their country of origin, 86.8% are Japanese, 4.4% came from other Asian countries, 3.5% from Europe, 4.2% from Anglo-American countries, and 1.1% from elsewhere. Among the respondents, 88% have already worked in Japan, 96% plan to do so in the future, and 54% live in Kanto (the Tokyo area). They are relatively well educated as more than 63% hold at least a BSc degree.

In order to ensure a better reliability for the data, all incomplete responses were ignored. Based on the control question-pairs in the questionnaire, incoherent answers were identified and filtered out as well. Ready for further analysis, the final panel contained 794 answered questionnaires. These remaining responses have three key characteristics: (1) they were registered in an appropriate timeframe, about 18–19 minutes on average; (2) they are all complete; (3) they have some basic internal coherence which shows that the values were given in a deliberate manner. Some questionnaire items were formulated reflecting a positive view on traditional management, some others were the opposite, in order to monitor the respondents' attention. For analysing purposes, items were reformulated and conversed variables values have been used.

The questionnaire included statements where respondents were asked to rate on a seven-point Likert-scale the extent to which they agreed with them. The scale had been changed from five-point to seven-point after the testing phase, when it became clear that the Japanese tend to avoid extremes more than expected. Thus, in order to keep the information content of the data as high as possible, the scale was upgraded. After the 67 statements to be rated, the survey consisted of 17 profile questions which also needed to be fully answered (except for that on salary) in order to complete the questionnaire. This profile part made it possible to know what type of person answered the questionnaire and to link the responses with social status, income, or age in a further analysis.

4.2.4. Data analysis and findings

Similarity between each pair of items was measured by correlation coefficients. Analysis of Spearman's rho values revealed relevant relationship between the items. It draw the attention for possible relevant patterns in the data set. Therefore, in the further analysis none of the variables were designated as dependent, no grouping of variables were pre-assumed and tested. Principal Component Analysis (PCA) served as an appealing statistical tool for conducting an explorative research as it requires essentially no assumptions for finding a new, a low-dimensional structure of variables (Hair, 2019).

Statistical inference from PCA is improved if the variables are multivariate normal. This was supported by a variable transformation before running PCA. 67 items measured on the seven-point Likert scale were transformed into a centered form: the average value of each respondent is calculated for all of the items and then the average was subtracted from each corresponding item. This method of subtracting the row average from each element in a row is called as centering across the second mode (Bro & Smilde, 2003), a tool for normalization..

Centering across the second mode reduces the systematic error of Likert-scale measurement by eliminating the individual preferences of the respondents for a constant better or worse grading and makes the variables easy to interpret. A positive value shows that the given variable gained support above average of own assessments. Negative value shows that the variable was supported below average of own assessments.

Our database was theoretically applicable for conducting PCA as the determinant of the correlation matrix of original variables was close to zero, the Measure of Sampling Adequacy had a value of 0.817 and Bartlett's Test showed that the null hypotheses of independence of variables can be rejected. In this research PCA was run for the centered variables. Correlation matrix of the centered variables is singular with a determinant of zero making the calculation of chi square measures such as Bartlett's Test unreportable.

Orthogonal transformation, Varimax rotation was made to convert the set of correlated variables into linearly uncorrelated latent variables called factors, using SPSS 20.0. Five significant factors were identified while using the Varimax rotation method. The number of factors has been defined based on the scree-plot. A notable drop could be identified after the 5th factor in the plot. All five factors extracted had an eigenvalue greater than 2

and were bipolar factors: variables belonging to a factor were related to the same phenomena but with clearly recognizable opposite characteristic.

The bipolar nature of the resulting 5 factors made it possible to define 10 latent categories of the underlying 67 items or variables: one latent variable covering the original variables positively correlated with one factor and an another latent variable covering the original variables negatively correlated with the same factor.

The latent variables have been calculated as the linear combinations of original variables weighted by factors scores. Consequently variables highly correlated with the factor account more for the latent variable. Each latent variable is a composite summary of at least 3 variables. Table 2 illustrates the items which loaded on the 10 factors. For ease of interpretation, latent variables belonging to the same factor (F1, F2, F3, F4 and F5) were differentiated in labelling by P (as positive) and N (as negative). At the same time it must be noted that positive and negative labels refer merely to their opposite nature.

Table 2: The five factors with the ten latent categories.

Interpretation of the factors extracted		Interpretation of variables positively correlated with the factor		Interpretation of variables negatively correlated with the factor	
F1	Workplace	F1p	Large community firms	F1n	Salary men's firm: mass-recruited, risk-avoider, internal managers
F2	Professional career & corporate life	F2p	Slow promotion and seniority versus performance	F2n	Individual interests (career, corporate life) are secondary
F3	Employment	F3p	A manager's responsibility: stay close to the workers, keep employment and make good products	F3n	Employment priority goes for men
F4	Organisational structure	F4p	Cross-shareholding - Consensus-based decision making with silent shareholders	F4n	Central HR activity support the various units
F5	Status	F5p	Protected, long-term jobs	F5n	Core status for elite workers

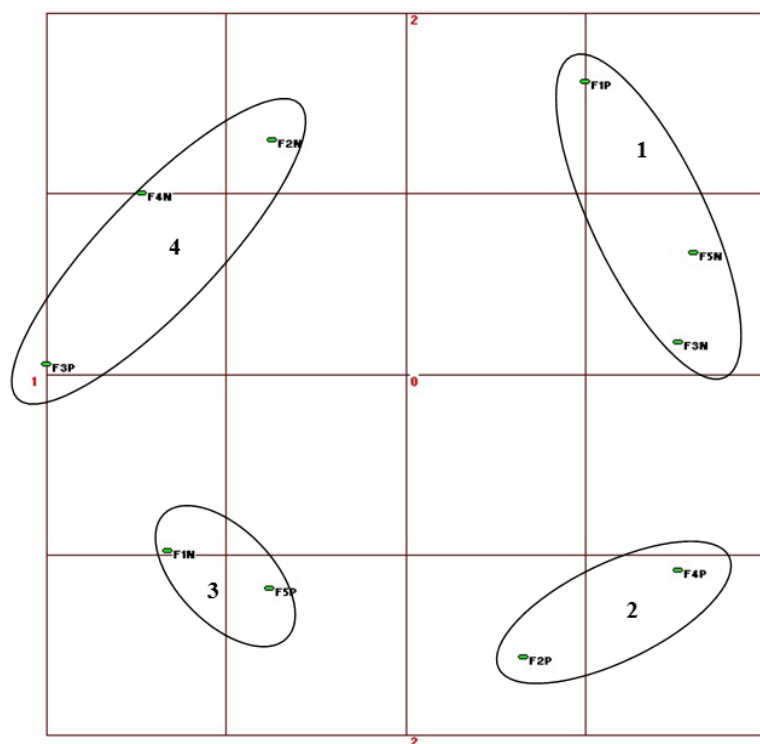
Source: authors

In order to show and visualize the level of dissimilarity of the 10 latent variables, multidimensional scaling was used. A non-metric model, the MINISSA (Michigan-Israel-Netherlands Integrated Smallest Space Analysis) was used to analyse the dissimilarities. Correlation matrix of the 10 calculated variables served as input matrix for MINISSA using Euclidean distance as a measure. The visualized output presented in Figure 1 unfold that the 10 latent variables stretch the two-dimensional space in a way that variables representing the two polars of a factor are placed on the opposite ends of the same continuum. Stress value of 0,127404 shows a good fit of multidimensional scaling.

Thus, by using PCA, an underlying latent structure of the original 67 variables related to Japanese Management has been defined in a bipolar setting. By portraying the relationship of the new latent categories, a graphical technique, i.e. multidimensional scaling proved that the dimension reduction was valid. The two-dimensional plot suggests that not only the 10 latent categories describing the Japanese Management should be interpreted, but the four quarters defined by the two dimensions as well. We needed to explain why these 2 or 3 latent categories representing one quarter of the space were more similar to each other than to other categories in other quarters. We found that even the left half of the space could be recognized and construed against the right half.

Figure 1: The 10 latent variables visualised by MDS

FINAL CONFIGURATION - STRESS DHAT = 0.127404 : dimensions 1 and 2



Source: authors

4.2.5. Interpreting the MINISSA chart

In this following section, we carry on the above-mentioned interpretation based on Vaszkun (2012), a comprehensive description of J-style management.

Q1 (top right): Status Community

The results shown in the MINISSA chart suggest that the latent categories F1P (large community firms), F5N (core status for elite workers), and F3N (employment priority goes for men) construct the first quarter of the space of variables.

In the context of Japanese management, "large community firms" refers to companies that are more than just workplaces; they are viewed as communities: not just as an economic entity but as a social organization, providing employees with more than just a job—often extending to social and familial life.

The variable “Core status for elite workers” refers to the hierarchical differentiation within Japanese firms, where certain "core" employees—typically full-time, long-term male workers—hold privileged positions. These elite workers are recruited directly from school and remain with the company for their entire careers, often advancing to management roles. They are the backbone of the company, entrusted with the most important tasks and responsibilities. This core status comes with job security, significant influence within the firm, and a path toward leadership positions, forming a clear divide between them and other, more temporary or part-time workers.

While changes have occurred in recent years, traditional Japanese management practices have long seen men as the primary breadwinners, reserving core positions, long-term employment, and career advancement opportunities for male employees. Women, on the other hand, were often placed in temporary or part-time roles, with societal expectations often pushing them to quit upon marriage or childbirth. This practice reflects a deeply rooted gender division in the workforce, linked to Confucian and patriarchal values.

We found that this quarter could be the best interpreted as the “Status Community” concept in J-style management. The two words are both important here, since the term status relates to the facts that work groups and employees in Japan are highly hierarchized and the status of regular worker compared with the irregulars is highly distinguished. At the same time however, Japanese organizations and working groups

remain communities after all, where all organizational members exists for the group and via the others whose support is compulsory for the survival.

Q2 (bottom right): Stable Networks

We found that the second quarter (F4P – Cross-shareholding and consensus-based decision-making with silent shareholders, F2P – slow promotion and seniority versus performance) focuses on long-term, group-based relationships. Cross-shareholding refers to companies owning shares in one another, often within tightly knit networks like keiretsu. These cross-shareholding arrangements encourage stability, as companies are less likely to face hostile takeovers, and it promotes long-term, mutually beneficial relationships between firms. The shareholders involved in these structures tend to be "silent" in decision-making, meaning they exert minimal influence on the day-to-day operations, allowing managers more autonomy to pursue long-term goals without the pressure of short-term shareholder returns. The decision-making process in this context is consensus-driven, requiring broad agreement across different levels of the organization. This consensus-building process, known as *nemawashi* or *ringi*, ensures that decisions reflect the collective interest of the organization and its stakeholders, rather than being driven by the individual demands of more assertive shareholders.

In many traditional Japanese companies, promotions are primarily based on seniority, with the pace of career advancement being slow compared to Western firms. This system aims to maintain long-term stability and workplace harmony by ensuring that employees are gradually elevated through the ranks based on their length of service rather than immediate performance. While this does not entirely exclude performance as a factor, it is secondary to experience and tenure. This structure is rooted in historical practices from the Tokugawa period and is seen as a way to reward employees for their loyalty and long-term commitment to the company. The emphasis on seniority and slow promotion can foster workplace cohesion, as employees who joined the company around the same time tend to be promoted together, which limits internal competition and ensures that relationships within teams remain stable over time. However, this can sometimes cause frustration among younger, high-performing employees, as rapid advancement is rare.

The combination of these concepts reflects a commitment to building lasting, stable, and collective relationships within the company and with business partners. Both cross-shareholding with consensus decision-making and slow promotion based on seniority are built on principles of stability and long-term thinking. Cross-shareholding creates

stable networks that reduce the volatility of corporate governance by ensuring that companies are less susceptible to market fluctuations and shareholder pressure. Considering these above and interpreting the quadrant, we found that "Stable Networks" will be an apt label.

Q3 (bottom left): Protected Salarymen

This quadrant is composed of the latent variables "Salarymen's firm: mass-recruited, risk-avoider, internal managers", and "Protected, long-term jobs".

The concept of a "salarymen's firm" reflects a traditional structure within Japanese companies, characterized by the mass recruitment of young employees, typically directly from school. These workers, often known as *salarymen*, are expected to stay with the company for the majority of their careers, aligning with the firm's goals and avoiding unnecessary risks. Risk aversion is a key characteristic of these employees, stemming from a desire for job security and stability. These internal managers often rise through the ranks not by external recruitment, but through a long-term, internal process that favours loyalty and seniority. As internal managers, they are typically less inclined to take bold risks, as their promotion and stability are tied to internal consensus-building and cautious decision-making.

"Protected, long-term jobs" refers to the traditional Japanese employment system often described as lifetime employment. This system offers employees security, with the understanding that once they are hired, they will remain with the company until retirement, barring extraordinary circumstances. This system not only creates a sense of loyalty but also aligns with the broader Japanese cultural value of collectivism.

The short distance between these two in Figure 1 can be explained by a strong interconnection. The mass recruitment of salarymen directly supports the long-term employment system by creating a workforce that is committed to the company from a young age, willing to avoid risks, and focus on internal promotion rather than seeking external opportunities. Long-term job protection ensures that the salarymen's aversion to risk is rewarded with stability, creating a reciprocal relationship between employee loyalty and corporate responsibility. The companies invest in their workers' training and development, expecting in return a lifetime of dedicated service.

Q4 (top left): Managed Collectivism

Based on Figure 1, latent variables “F2N – Secondary individual interests, collectivism”, “F4N – Central HR support”, and “F3P – Management close to workers, focusing on employment and product quality” construct this quadrant.

Secondary individual interests and Collectivism reflects the prioritization of group goals and harmony over individual desires. In the Japanese workplace, workers are expected to subordinate their personal interests to the collective objectives of the team or company. This aligns with Japan's historical focus on collectivism, where social cohesion and group success take precedence over individual achievements.

The role of centralized human resource management in Japan is pivotal in maintaining this collective approach. The central HR department coordinates essential aspects like recruitment, employee transfers, and training, ensuring that workers align with the company's collective objectives from the outset of their careers. HR departments in Japan are known to be more powerful and centralized than in Western firms, reflecting their role in sustaining long-term employment, managing job rotation, and promoting seniority-based systems.

Japanese management often emphasizes being physically and relationally close to workers, fostering a sense of trust and open communication. This is reflected in practices such as "management by walking around" and the use of quality circles, where workers and management collaborate closely on production issues. The focus on both job security (through lifetime employment practices) and high product quality forms a key element of Japanese firms' strategy. This proximity to employees ensures that management not only oversees work but is actively involved in understanding and addressing worker concerns, reinforcing the idea that the company and its workforce are a single entity with shared objectives.

These three concepts are deeply intertwined. Central HR support facilitates a culture of long-term employment and group cohesion, while management's close interaction with workers ensures that the collectivist approach is sustained in day-to-day operations. We found that a term such as "Managed Collectivism" would encapsulate these features effectively. "Managed" refers to the structured and centralized oversight provided by HR and management, ensuring that collectivist values are upheld and that individual interests do not disrupt group harmony. "Collectivism" acknowledges the priority given to group goals over individual aspirations, a cornerstone of Japanese corporate culture. Together, these terms highlight how Japanese firms manage their human resources and

workplace culture in a way that balances individual contributions with collective success.

Rows and Columns

We stated above that even the left half of the MDS space could be recognized and construed against the right half – same as the top and the bottom row. We have also explained the concepts of collectivism and community-firms which make it evident that the first row illustrates Japanese management as a group-focused phenomenon.

At the same time, protection around Japanese companies, *Keiretsus* and the Salarymen highlights stability as one of the most important features of J-style management.

The column on the right, with the community concept and the stable networks emphasises connections or relations between the various actors in corporate life. The column on the left is more centered around hierarchy and status, turning our attention to formal and informal rules governing economy and society in Japan. Table 3 summarises our explanations regarding the research results.

Table 3: The interpreted MINISSA chart

	Focus on Rules	Focus on Relations
Group-focus	Q4 - Managed Collectivism	Q1 - Status community
Stability	Q3 - Protected Salarymen	Q2 - Stable Networks

Source: authors

4.2.6. Summary and conclusion

This essay examines the challenge of defining Japanese management comprehensively, given the complexity of its cultural and historical roots, and attempts to create a more nuanced model to understand it. The authors highlight how the Japanese management system is more than the sum of its parts, emphasising the importance of cultural context in shaping business practices. Drawing on previous literature, the authors build a model that categorises Japanese management into key dimensions, which are then tested and refined using statistical methods.

The research relies on a comprehensive survey designed to capture attitudes towards 30 distinct features of Japanese management, grouped under categories such as environment, intra-organisational context, strategy, structure, behaviour and performance. The study employs statistical techniques, such as Principal Component Analysis (PCA), to reduce the number of variables and develop a simplified model. The analysis reveals five significant factors, each with its bipolar latent variables, which offer a deeper understanding of the distinctive aspects of Japanese management. These factors are summarised into four quadrants: Status Community, Stable Networks, Managed Collectivism, and Protected Salarymen. The quadrant "Status Community" reflects the hierarchical nature of Japanese organisations, where elite workers, typically male, are privileged with long-term, secure positions. "Stable Networks" refers to the use of cross-shareholding and slow, seniority-based promotions, fostering stable, long-term business relationships. "Managed Collectivism" encapsulates the collectivist mindset of Japanese companies, supported by centralised human resources and close management-worker relationships. Finally, "Protected Salarymen" refers to the traditional Japanese employment system, where mass recruitment and long-term job security ensure that workers remain loyal to the company throughout their careers.

The study concludes that Japanese management is a unique and complex system, shaped by deep-rooted cultural and historical factors. The authors' statistical analysis provides a structured way to understand its key characteristics, such as collectivism, long-term employment, hierarchical status, and stability in business relationships. These factors, while individually not unique to Japan, combine to form a distinctive national management style that has had a profound impact on both Japanese corporations and global management practices.

Despite its strengths, the Japanese management model is not without its challenges, particularly in adapting to modern globalisation pressures and the need for more flexible, performance-based systems. However, the stability, loyalty, and long-term focus that define Japanese management continue to offer valuable lessons for businesses worldwide. The study contributes to the ongoing debate about how best to describe and categorise Japanese management, providing a comprehensive model that captures its core elements while acknowledging the need for further refinement and adaptation in the face of changing economic and social conditions.

Appendix: Questionnaire items

- 1) Work is always a team achievement, never just individual performance.
- 2) Salaries should be entirely based on performance, no matter the age or seniority of employees.
- 3) Going out with colleagues after work is important.
- 4) Staying in the same company long term is not good because it blocks internal competition and limits career prospects.
- 5) If I were graduating now, I would rather go to a company with foreign management: they understand better what a young employee needs.
- 6) It is good to have internal competition in a company among employees as it enhances performance.
- 7) If a person is highly qualified he/she should be quickly promoted even if his/her subordinates end up being much older than he/she is.
- 8) Individual appraisal of performance is a threat to harmony; companies should measure group performance.
- 9) Recruitment agencies (head hunters) should gain a more prominent role in job hunting because the companies only hire new graduates: older people also need job opportunities.
- 10) I am grateful to my company and I express this with my hard work every day.
- 11) The best way for decision-making is to vote: it is clear and efficient.
- 12) It is good to have a limited number of “core workers” with some privileges in a company: achieving this status will motivate every employee.
- 13) I try to pursue hobbies / social activities away from work.
- 14) Company postings involving separation from family are acceptable / unavoidable.
- 15) Skill development (training) is the responsibility of the company, not the individual worker.
- 16) People should try harder to achieve consensus in decision-making: group harmony is worth the time invested in that process.
- 17) Lifetime (or long-term) employment is outdated: I don't want to stay in the same company for such a long time.

- 18) Performance should be a significant element of the wage but it is not good if a young person earns more than an older one.
- 19) Mainly performance-based pay is not good as it leads to merely short-term goals and hinders cooperation.
- 20) The best way to increase size for a company is to hire more young graduates from top universities.
- 21) In a company it is always desirable to have a leader with a strong vision: so people following him/her go in the same direction and raise their performance.
- 22) It is all right and sometimes even desirable to take risk in business.
- 23) If one day I want to find a new job, I will send my CV to several recruitment agencies.
- 24) I recognize equality between men and women but somehow I feel more comfortable having a male superior.
- 25) The Japanese companies are too homogeneous: they should hire people with different backgrounds – even from foreign countries.
- 26) Small and large firms have different characteristics and possibilities: it is acceptable and normal that compensation and benefits are also different according to the size of the company.
- 27) If possible, taking risk is to be avoided when it can endanger job security.
- 28) It is possible to lay off considerable numbers of employees without strong reactions (quarrel) within either the company or in the broader society.
- 29) In a company the group consensus is more important than any leader or manager: group cohesiveness is the best tool to ensure common vision and good performance.
- 30) Recruitment and career management is better held at central (Human Resources department) level because it costs less and gives a better overview on employee transfers.
- 31) I always express my personal opinion during important meetings and others should do the same: people without opinion cannot give any contribution to the group.
- 32) Recruitment and career management is better held at division / unit level because it would be more appropriate to the real needs of the company.
- 33) Before decision-making, it is always better to know the others' opinion about the issue.

- 34) It is normal that women quit their job at marriage or childbirth.
- 35) Achieving the goals as a team is our common responsibility, not only our manager's.
- 36) Differences between "core workers" and temporary staff or part-timers are nonsense: they are doing the same job anyway.
- 37) The re-employment of retirees should be banned because it takes jobs from young people.
- 38) The job of the union is to confront the management in order to represent purely the workers' interests.
- 39) It is better to evaluate workers by the way they do their job than by the result, as the result may depend on many things.
- 40) People should never work alone, co-workers can bring help and play an important role in correcting each others' mistakes.
- 41) Working in an open office is tiring; every company should try to give individual offices for their white-collar staff.
- 42) Making friends is one of the most important things in a company.
- 43) Regular rotation of employees should be avoided: it is confusing and they cannot specialize in their jobs.
- 44) Employees recruited at the same time should basically be promoted together: it fosters cooperation between members, limiting harmful competition.
- 45) It is better not to promote people very fast, older managers are wiser and usually do a better job.
- 46) There is nothing wrong with having a female boss: as a manager they can perform as well as men.
- 47) It is better if the union cooperates and keeps friendly relations with the management as the economic health of the company is also in the interest of the workers.
- 48) Labor unions and their activity are nowadays irrelevant to employees' lives.
- 49) I would rather work for a large organization than a small one.
- 50) The performance of older people is usually better due to their greater experience.

- 51) Rotating employees regularly is good because they can get better knowledge and vision about the company as a whole, so probably they can become better managers.
- 52) There is too much stress and depression related to corporate life today: life was better 20 years ago.
- 53) It is important to protect our markets and jobs from foreign competition.
- 54) It is very important for directors of a company to not only represent the owners' (shareholders') interests but also the ones of employees, business partners, or other members of our society.
- 55) Big companies need more transparency and control by the market: there should be at least one external director on the board.
- 56) It is good if the company can offer a seat on the board of directors to its senior managers at the end of their career.
- 57) A top manager (CEO) recruited from another organization usually succeeds better in making the company more efficient and productive than a CEO who is promoted from within the lower ranks of the same company.
- 58) If the owners of a company do not put pressure on managers to achieve good results even in the short term, the company will perform less well.
- 59) The key success factor for a company is to produce good quality products at an affordable price – succeeding in this ensures almost automatic success.
- 60) Japanese companies should pay more attention to efficient marketing: today it may be more important than the quality of the products.
- 61) Financial and profitability indicators are more important for judging a company's performance than sales or market share.
- 62) Japanese top managers should earn much more than 10 times the young graduate new recruits' salary (in the USA it can be 50 times more).
- 63) Companies should always form interest groups so they can be much stronger.
- 64) Stakeholders of a company are not limited to shareholders, and management must appropriately reflect multiple interests.
- 65) The company can prosper more in the long term if shareholders are "silent" and do not demand short-term profit above all.

- 66) Owning shares on a reciprocal basis between companies (cross-shareholding) is good, mostly enhancing cooperation.
- 67) Owning shares on a reciprocal basis between companies (cross-shareholding) is bad, tying them together, hindering financial results.

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