

Analysis of Japanese Cultural Patterns

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Abstract: Japan is a close neighbor of China. Since ancient times, China and Japan have had close cultural exchanges. The splendid Chinese culture has played an extremely important role in the course of Japanese history and the development of Japanese culture. The discussion of Japanese culture can enhance the understanding between the two peoples, and can also achieve the purpose of cross-cultural communication through the study of Japanese culture. Hofstede's cultural dimension theory and Minkov's cultural dimension theory used in this paper provide a strong theoretical basis and support for cultural analysis and interpretation in the context of the rapid development of globalization and cross-cultural communication. This paper makes a deep analysis of Japanese culture through seven cultural dimensions, from which it can be seen that Japan is a country with a relatively large power gap, a tendency to collectivism, masculinity and uncertainty avoidance. At the same time, Japanese culture is a laissez-faire culture with strong flexibility and a tendency to universalism.

Keywords: Analysis of Japanese Culture; Hofstede; Minkov.

1. Introduction

Japan is a close neighbor of our country. Since ancient times, the cultures of China and Japan have had close exchanges, so the Japanese culture also has some similarities with the Chinese culture. The discussion of Japanese culture can enhance the understanding between the two peoples, and can also achieve the purpose of cross-cultural communication through the study of Japanese culture.

2. Analysis of Japanese Cultural Patterns

Typical features of Japanese culture: deeply influenced by Confucianism, it has created a hierarchical country. In addition, because of its narrow territory and large population, Japan has long developed the concept of valuing the collective and the nation. Furthermore, in call Japanese person, can be called "Sir" or "miss" or "lady", also can be in after the last name or name with a "gentleman" word, to be regarded as "so-and-so gentleman". Only in very formal cases do Japanese people use their full names. The Japanese greeting is basically expressed by bowing, which comes from the Tang Dynasty culture. Stand with your feet together, upright, and bent. From a general salute to a 90-degree upper body bow. According to the degree of etiquette, the Angle of lowering the head is various. In the room covered with "たたみ" (tatami), the salute must be performed while seated. Why did this Japanese cultural pattern come about? Based on the theory proposed by Hofstede and Minkov, the author makes a detailed analysis of Japanese cultural patterns from seven dimensions.

2.1. Hofstede's Value Dimensions

In the study of cultural dimension, Hofstede (1980, 1991) defined four important dimensions of social culture: individualism and collectivism, uncertainty avoidance, low or high-power gap, masculinity and femininity.

2.1.1. Collectivism and Individualism

In the table above, Japan is ranked 24th, which shows that Japan is more inclined to collectivism. The Japanese are indifferent to the sense of kinship, and the sense of

community and community interests often override the interests of individuals and families, and tend to ignore or dilute the differences between people in the community. In traditional society, Japanese people often refer to the community they belong to as "home", and the relationship between a Lord or leader and his subordinates is similar to the "parent-child relationship" in a Chinese family. The former is responsible for the survival and development of the Community and the interests of each member; The latter must show genuine and unlimited loyalty to the community to which they belong and, in extreme cases, disregard the existence of the individual altogether.

The reasons can be attributed to the following two aspects:

First, production and lifestyle. Since the 2nd century AD, Japanese agriculture has been based on rice fields supported by densely woven artificial waterways. For this system to function properly, it is necessary to strengthen the construction of "village communities" and allocate water resources through negotiation and cooperation. The centuries-long cooperative behavior with "village community" as the core has largely cultivated the Japanese preference for safeguarding the interests of the community they belong to and for collective action.

Second, religious factors. Shinto is a traditional national religion in Japan. It belongs to the belief of animism and polytheism. It regards various animals and plants in nature as gods and centers on Amaterasu, the god symbolizing the sun. Shinto is still the most popular religion in Japan, with 80% of the population (Li Yan, 2014). Thus, it can be seen that this doctrine of Shinto and its influence over other religions in Japan must produce a strong cohesion and centripetal force among the Japanese.

In modern society, the prominent tendency of collectivism in Japanese culture is reflected in its enterprise management mode. The characteristics of Japanese enterprise management are highlighted in the lifetime employment system, the senior-service wage system and the enterprise labor union, which constitute the indispensable three powerful pillars of modern enterprise management in Japan. If through the representative of this system, buried in its deep is the "collectivism" business thought. Wu Huajia (2009) believes that "collectivism" regards the enterprise as a community of destiny with a big

family. Everyone in the enterprise (including the top manager) is a member of this community. When the enterprise contacts with the outside world, it appears as a whole group.

2.1.2. Uncertainty Avoidance

In the uncertainty avoidance table, Japan ranks 7. In Hofstede's (1980) study, countries with lower numbers prefer uncertainty less. It can be seen that Japan is a country with a high degree of uncertainty avoidance. Hofstede(1991) defined uncertainty avoidance as "the degree to which members in a socio-cultural situation feel threatened by uncertain and unknown situations..." This indicator describes a response to unstructured and ambiguous nature. In countries with high uncertainty avoidance, members' need for security outweighs other emotional appeals. They believe this uncertainty can be reduced with clear procedures, good strategies, and formal rules. People in this environment are less willing to take risks and prefer predictable outcomes.

This culture is mainly reflected in the corporate culture of Japan. In Japan, organizations with high uncertainty avoidance try to reduce uncertainty through rules, procedures and some methods to restrict decision-making and monitoring behavior. This kind of board can bring a large number of different technical and capability resources related to dealing with complex problems, and reduce risks by having greater information processing ability. In the corporate control structure under this social and cultural background, external directors have little influence, and the salary of senior executives is not highly dependent on performance, that is, an external incentive mechanism similar to equity incentive is constructed. Japanese workers change employers less often and serve longer. More trust in the work of experts, there are more professionals in the organization. Employees are more motivated by the need to be safe and belong.

2.1.3. Low or High-power Gap

In the table of the power distance dimension, it can be seen that Japan ranks 33, the lowest ranking, the higher the power distance of the country. The data show that Japan is a country with a high power distance. People with high power distance countries believe that power and authority are a fact of life. These cultures teach their members, consciously or unconsciously, that people are not equal in the world and that each person has a specific place, clearly marked by a myriad of social hierarchies, often based on factors such as surname, education, age, occupation, or organizational occupation. Organizations in high power distance cultures often have strong collectivization of power, recognition and use of rank and status, and adherence to established lines of power.

The reason for this cultural phenomenon is not difficult to analyze: Japan is also deeply influenced by Confucianism. According to Goji, the introduction of Chinese Confucianism into Japan began in the early 5th century, when Jin, the King of Baekje, brought the Analects into Japan. Confucianism introduced into Japan coexisted with Buddhism and Shinto for a long time, and merged with each other to form a unique Japanese Confucianism and create a country with strict hierarchy. In ancient times, the sequence of ranks was arranged by the royal family, nobles, scholars, farmers, workers, and merchants, and there were detailed divisions in each rank, the lowest being the untouchables called "filthy many".

Nowadays, this rank is mainly based on the position held in the company or group, from the lowest new member to the highest president, there are countless steps in between. Japanese companies concentrate as much power as possible

in the hands of a few people, superiors enjoy special privileges, and the connection between superiors and subordinates is initiated by superiors and accepted by subordinates. The income gap between the upper and lower levels is large. For this hierarchical order, the vast majority of Japanese people agree, but no one dares to easily offside. In addition, from the social etiquette of Japanese people's attachment to business cards, we can see the deep-rooted sense of hierarchical identity and the psychology of keeping their own place. Japanese business card etiquette is very complicated. The first time to meet, after receiving the business card, the Japanese first pay attention to the title and position of the head, because it is related to what kind of etiquette he will adopt, and the degree of wording and use of honorifics in the dialogue is determined by the social status and relationship of the two parties. In addition, the amplitude of bowing and the order of presenting business cards are also determined by the level of status. In Japan, people with high status have the initiative to exchange business cards, and people with low status can only take out business cards when the other person shows willingness to communicate with them. Generally speaking, the larger the bow, the more pious the attitude, the smaller the title on the card; On the contrary, the smaller the bow and the more agreeable the attitude, the greater the title, and the two are just inversely proportional.

2.1.4. Masculinity and Femininity

This dimension refers to the extent to which people emphasize confidence, competition, materialism (career success oriented), and also relationships and the benefits of others (quality of life oriented). As can be seen from the rankings in the table, Japan is in the first place, with a more masculine tendency. The society has a strong sense of competition, and believes that the measure of success is wealth and fame. The society encourages and appreciates workaholics, and people advocate using a decisive way to solve the conflict problem in the organization, emphasizing fair competition and focusing on work performance. As a result, Japanese society is stricter.

The reason behind this is not difficult to explore, the Japanese believe that life is short, you should speed up and produce more results. The view of life is: live to work. The status of women in Japan is also lower than that of men, until now, there are still many traditional Japanese families adhere to the "male master outside, female master inside" mode of life, once married, women will quit their jobs, do a "full-time wife" at home, concentrate on taking care of the family, responsible for the education of children.

In the modern world, the Japanese corporate management style is: decisive and aggressive, through the "better win" way to resolve conflicts. Thinking that life is for work, people prefer more money. This will also affect Japanese people's perception of the image of the tourist destination. Domestic scholars Liu Bo, Li Yuee, Li Ling and Wang Wenjing take Japanese tourists in Taishan Scenic spot as an example to analyze. As Japan is a country with strong masculine temperament, Japanese tourists are more strict and demanding, so they have more negative comments on the image of Taishan and low satisfaction on the image of Taishan.

2.2. Minkov's Cultural Dimensions

2.2.1. Industrious Culture and Laissez-faire Culture

This dimension considers how priorities for hard work and laissez-faire differ across national cultures. As can be seen from the table, most underdeveloped countries attach great

importance to industriousness or hard work, while those with developed economies are more inclined to a laissez-faire culture. It shows that as a country's economy develops and people get more wealth and social security, they begin to enjoy life instead of working. In the table, a higher score is seen as a culture that favors hard work; A lower score indicates a preference for a laissez-faire culture. Japan's score in this cultural dimension is relatively low, which shows that Japan is more inclined to laissez-faire culture.

The reason is related to Japan's national conditions. Japan belongs to the developed country, is the first developed country in Asia. In 2018, Japan's GDP was \$496 billion, and its per capita GDP reached \$40,000 as early as the 1990s, making it a highly developed country. According to Minkov's data, most economically advanced countries are more prone to cultural indulgence. Therefore, Japan, a highly developed country, prefers a laissez-faire culture.

Japanese people give us the feeling is very restrained, very stiff and even a little stiff, as if by a frame, speech and behavior as if there are unified standards and operating guidelines, there is no feeling of relaxation. But the strange thing is that in Japan's entertainment and pornography culture, they will be found to be very "laissez-faire", and even people dare not associate with the business elite in the suit and tie during the day. As a result, Japan generally prefers a laissez-faire culture.

2.2.2. Commemorative and Flexible

Minkov argues that monumental depictions of culture exhibit a high degree of self-pride, as well as "immutable identities, strong values, unshakable beliefs, and avoidance of personal duality and inconsistency". Flexibility, a combination of the words "self-flexibility" and "humility," is the antithesis of monumental cultures and is characteristic of cultures that typically exercise humility and situational flexibility, which readily adapt to changing circumstances. The score of Japan in the table is only 40 points, and the lower the score, the higher the cultural tendency of flexibility. It can be seen that Japan is a country with strong flexibility.

Japanese life can feel very depressing. On subways and trams, few people speak loudly or make phone calls. Everyone keeps silent. They are very polite and try not to cause trouble to others. In addition, under the influence of this culture, the embodied characteristics include humility. Japanese people are very humble. In terms of body movements, Japanese people have the habit of bowing, which shows humility and respect, and bowing is used very frequently in Japanese society. In terms of language, the Japanese love to use self-deprecating language in social activities, and are good at belittling others. "Please take good care of me", "humble food, poor care", etc., are common phrases they often use.

The Japanese have a strong distinction between "inside" and "outside" and are reluctant to explain "inside" things such as family affairs.

2.2.3. Exclusivism and Universalism

This cultural dimension has strong similarities with Hofstede's individualism and collectivism. However, Minkov focuses more on the level of national wealth or economic development, emphasizing the role that cultural differences play in determining how people treat each other. In exclusionist cultures, people develop strong in-group

relationships and rely on these relationships to receive and give favors and help when needed. In contrast, members of societies in universalist cultures tend to treat everyone equally, regardless of which group they belong to. In the table, Japan scores lower and is more of a universalist culture.

It can be clearly seen from the table that economically underdeveloped countries have a strong preference for exclusivist culture, while developed countries are more inclined to universalism. Japan is a developed country, and in rich countries, people generally have higher personal incomes and social support programs are more common, which helps self-reliance and reduces the need for help from others. This is one reason why Japan leans towards universalism.

3. Conclusion

Hofstede's cultural dimension theory and Minkov's cultural dimension theory used in this paper provide a strong theoretical basis and support for cultural analysis and interpretation in the context of the rapid development of globalization and cross-cultural communication. Based on the cultural dimension of Hofstede and Minkov, this paper analyzes the characteristics of Japanese culture and tries to analyze the reasons behind it. To sum up, Japan is a country with a relatively large power gap, a tendency to collectivism, masculinity and uncertainty avoidance. Meanwhile, Japanese culture is laissez-faire, flexible and inclined to universalism.

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