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SOFTWARE PROJECT MANAGEMENT



ASSIGNMENT # 1



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TOPIC:

* You have to come up with Japanese terms that describe Project Management, Work Culture, Work Ethics, Work Quality and Hard work.



* History of the term coinage, its use in Japanese context and an example having local context need to be presented and explained to the class.



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Japanese citizens:

To shape a hardworking country the way Japan has is no easy task. These values have to be taught from a very young age and modeled as an example by most citizens. This is exactly what Japan has done throughout history and is still doing today.

# Long hours and hard work:

Japan is not only notorious for having long working hours, but also for the hard work that employees do in these long hours every day.

Many employees work 80 to 100 hours every month and a lot of the time the overtime hours are unpaid. There is a term in Japan called*karoshi.Karoshi*literally translates into “death by overwork”. Why is this even a coined term? Because it actually happens quite frequently in Japan. By law, it is a recognized cause of death. Japanese employees do not often take a paid vacation or sick days. This due to a concept that is taught to them from a young age.



* + *Gaman:*

The concept of *ganbaru*(which literally translates to “stand firm”) and *gaman* (passive endurance) is very important in the Japanese workplace. The idea of *Ganbaru*is basically doing your best, but when it comes to business and working, it actually means doing more than your best or pushing yourself to the limit.

*Gaman*literally translates into ‘enduring the seemingly unbearable with patience and dignity.’ This means that no matter what you are going through, you should keep a smile on your face and you should not show your frustrations. In the context of working, it means that no matter how hard you have to work or how tired you feel, you should push through and do it with a smile.

*Gaman*can also be linked to Japanese philosophies of *honne*and *tatemae.*Honne refers to your inner being, while *tatemae*refers to what you show to the world. *Honne*is seldom shared with other people. *Tatemae*is an honorable and respectable version of yourself that you allow others to see.



*Gaman*means to suppress your inner feelings when you are going through something difficult and to persevere instead of expressing that you want to give up or that you wish you did not have to carry on.

These concepts are taught to children from the moment they begin to learn at school and is something of a second nature to them as they grow up and enter the workplace. The Japanese are taught that long hours and hard work should be accepted and welcomed.

However, new labor laws in Japan are being put in place to relax these kinds of rules. The Japanese government has recognized that overworking is a problem and has been trying to change regulations and laws that allow for intense overworking.

Formal Workplaces

In Japan, having a formal workplace environment is very important. The way an office looks, the way the employees are dressed, and the way in which employers and employees communicate with each other, is a big thing.

Usually, when speaking to a boss or someone higher up, most people would refer to them with a title and their last name. For example, Mr. Jones or Mrs. Smith. Perhaps even Sir or Ma’am.

But, in Japan, this is not only the way to address the boss or the manager. Employees address each other in this way too. It is considered rude to address a fellow employee by their first name.

In the corporate world, businessmen in Japan are often called “salarymen” and both men and women professionals have to adhere to a certain dress code. Going to work in casual attire is definitely frowned upon. Women wear navy or black skirts, white shirts, and kitten heels. Men wear suits and ties in neutral colors (no Spongebob or Mickey Mouse ties) no matter the weather. TheAnother big factor in the workplace is how it is designed. To ensure maximum efficiency and communication between employees, offices in Japan generally do not have cubicles. Instead, they are designed in an open-plan way. In Japanese, this type of design is referred to as *obeya-seido*and is specifically implemented so that everyone can work well together.



A downside to this is, of course, no privacy and noisiness. However, when it comes to being noisy, most employees do their best to keep other workers in mind and be respectful of them.re are not many bright colors or patterns.

# Ho~~-~~Ren~~-~~Su:

*Ho-ren-so*is a shortened version of 3 words. *Houkoku,renraku*, and *soudan*. When translated, *Houkoku*means “report”, *renraku*means “contact” and *soudan*means “consult.” Most companies use this concept in the workplace.



What this means, is that workers should run everything by their superiors. Whether it is a seemingly unimportant decision, a tiny problem, or a quick question, employees have to consult with their managers or bosses about it. This means that employees do not really have the right to make decisions on their own.

The relationship between bosses and employees is fundamental in Japan. There is a concept called *nenkou-jorestu.*This concept basically means that any superiors (whether it is because they are a boss or simply because they are older) should be given the utmost respect.

This is a very old system that stems from Confucianism. The belief is that people of

higher status or who have a higher ranking in society should be treated with more respect and admiration than those in lower rankings.

This, of course, does not mean that you can treat people who have a lower societal ranking in a bad way. What it means, is that you should be more careful when dealing with superiors. Even though this is a natural inclination for people all around the world, there is a lot more emphasis placed on it in Japan.

This practice can be seen when it comes to salaries and wages. Lower-ranking or beginner positions mean low salaries. The higher you are able to work yourself up, the higher your pay will increase. Even though this has been seen as a good incentive system to create hard workers, it has caused employees to never want to switch companies, because if they start at a new company, they would have to start working their way up again.

Because of this, many Japanese companies have however started using more merit- based systems recently.