

A Comparative study on Educational philosophies of Japan and Malaysian School Education System

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Cite this paper as: Dr. Darsana BG, (2025) A Comparative study on Educational philosophies of Japan and Malaysian School Education System. *Journal of Neonatal Surgery*, 14 (15s), 720-722.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to investigate the reflections on educational policies in Japan and Malaysia comparatively with regard to educational philosophies in school education. In this study a qualitative descriptive research was used to compare educational philosophies such as epistemology, axiology, concept of education, learner perspectives and knowledge aims related to creativity, innovation, skills and competencies of the two countries in their respective educational policies. The data were collected through document analysis. Content analysis was used to analyse qualitative data gathered from the official documents and research reports. Regarding the reflections of educational philosophies of policies, it was found that ultimate aim for knowledge acquisition is for overall development of the individual and the philosophy of education is thus concerned not only with philosophical questions about education as such but with larger questions of education policy and the roles of educational institutions in societies. It also reflect around the nature of education and the kinds of normative questions that arise concerning education for similar purposes in the two countries.

1. INTRODUCTION

Comparative education is an understanding of education systems and practices of different nations not only provides significant findings in terms of directing educational policies of different countries (Zhao et al., 2008), but enables to watch the world outside, as well (Bray & Jiang, 2014). The present study focuses on comparative investigation of educational policies within the framework of philosophies of education such as epistemology, axiology, concept of education, learner perspectives and knowledge aims related to creativity, innovation, skills and competencies of the two countries in their respective educational policies. It is considered important in terms of understanding the role of curriculum policies and curriculum development for the success of education systems. The comparative analysis of these countries reveals both commonalities and differences in their approaches to educational policies with respect to philosophies in education. Two nations recognize the importance of equipping students with global skills, yet their strategies reflect unique socio-cultural contexts. Malaysian philosophies of education focuses on individuals with the opportunity to improve their lives become successful members of the community, and active contributors to national development and, Japan strives to balance traditional axiology with modern educational needs, prioritizing global competence.

Objectives of the Study

- To compare the Educational philosophies of Japan and Malaysian school education system with reference to epistemology, axiology, and concept of education, learner perspectives and knowledge aims related to creativity, innovation, skills and competencies.

Methodology

This study uses qualitative comparative analysis to compare the Educational philosophies of Japan and Malaysian school education system. The methodology followed was qualitative method and the mode of data collection was content analysis. Qualitative content analysis involves close reading and interpretation of texts to identify recurring themes, concepts, and patterns. Content analysis is useful for identifying patterns in media messages, public discourse, and cultural trends. It includes document analysis of national educational policies of respective nations. In this study a comparative framework analyses of comparison of educational policies in Japan and Malaysia with to epistemology, axiology, and concept of education, learner perspectives and knowledge aims related to creativity, innovation, skills and competencies.

Educational Policy Analysis Based on Structure of Education

	Malaysia	Japan
1	Pre-primary/Kindergarten Education - 4 to 6 years	Nursery school-hoikuen Kindergarten-youchien (3 to 5years)
2	Primary Education - 7 to 12 years	Elementary school- <i>shōgakkō</i> -(6 to 9years)
3	Secondary Education - 13 to 17 years	Junior high school- <i>Chūgakkō</i> (10 to 12 years)
4	Upper Secondary Education - 16 to 17 years	High School(13 to 15years)
Structure	3+6+3+2	6+3+3+4
Total	13 years of school education	12 years of school education

Figure1: structure of school education of Malaysia and Japan

2. DISCUSSION

The foundations of educational philosophies of Japan's education system are shaped by a blend of traditional and modern influences, emphasizing moral development, discipline, and respect for hierarchy and authority. Shintoism and Buddhism contribute values like mindfulness, inner peace, and living in harmony with nature and others. Also, promoting individual rights, autonomy, and equality, which democratized education to ensure social mobility and access for all. Moral education is also a key element, instilling values such as respect, diligence, and empathy to foster personal growth and societal well-being. These diverse philosophical foundations create an education system that balances traditional values with modern ideals of equality and global citizenship. Education in Malaysia is an on-going effort towards the development of individual potentials in a holistic and integrated manner so as to produce individuals who are intellectually, spiritually, emotionally and physically balanced and harmonious based on a firm belief in God (Islam). Malaysian citizen who are capable of achieving a high level of personal well-being as well as able to contribute to the harmony and betterment of the nation at large (MoE, 1993). The 'Malaysian educational blueprint' as it is called, has at last recognized the importance of critical thinking skills and seeks ways to include these into the national curriculum. Philosophy for Children (P4C) is a teaching method that develops critical thinking and analytical reasoning in children. From the discussion the following points emerged:

- **Quality Education for All:** Both Japan and Malaysia ensure access to high-quality education for all learners, regardless of socio-economic background, with a focus on equity and equal opportunities
- **Holistic Development:** Japan seeks to cultivate intellectual, physical, and moral development, ensuring that students grow into well-rounded individuals. While in Malaysia more focus given to individual development.
- **Moulding Global Citizens:** Japan aims to develop students who can contribute to the global community, possess cross-cultural understanding, and have the skills to engage in a globalized society. While in Malaysia through individual development automatically leading to global sustainability.
- **Developing skills and Competencies:** Both the countries include fostering essential competencies such as problem-solving, critical thinking, and collaborative skills, which are necessary for success in a rapidly changing world.
- **Epistemology:** Japan's academic excellence by developing knowledge, thinking skills, and creativity. The education system emphasizes strong foundations in core subjects, including STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics), languages, and humanities. In Malaysia, the major focus is on learning of languages, Science and Mathematics to international standards. Focus on higher-order thinking skills by 2016 so as to strengthen STEM education. At the most basic level, every child will be fully literate and numerate. Beyond this, it is important that students master core subjects such as Mathematics and Science, and is informed with a rounded general knowledge of Malaysia, Asia, and the world. This would include their histories, people, and geography. Students will also be encouraged to develop their knowledge and skills in other areas such as the arts, music, and sports.
- **Innovation and Creativity:** Japan emphasizes fostering innovation and creativity, particularly in the areas of science and technology, to maintain Japan's competitive edge in the global economy. Malaysia is well focused and strategized to achieve its vision of a knowledge based and innovation- driven economy by making focused investments in the right areas.
- **Preserving Cultural Heritage:** Japan emphasis on teaching its rich cultural heritage and values, ensuring that

students understand their national identity while embracing global perspectives. In Malaysia, they actively incorporate cultural preservation into the education system by emphasizing a multicultural curriculum that highlights the diverse ethnicities within the country, aiming to foster national unity and identity through teaching traditional arts, languages, and festivals across different communities.

- **Citizenship and Social Responsibility:** Schools focus on developing a strong sense of responsibility as members of society. This involves promoting respect for the public good, encouraging cooperation, and instilling values of community service. In Malaysia the education system playing a key role in shaping citizens who are dedicated to the nation, promoting individual service and fidelity to the country, particularly considering its diverse multi-ethnic population.
- **International Understanding:** Japanese education promotes an understanding of Japan's history, traditions, and culture while also fostering an international perspective. Students are encouraged to appreciate other cultures and contribute to international peace and cooperation. Malaysia has sought to become an international education hub by integrating international perspectives into its education system.
- **Moral Education:** Moral education is integrated across the curriculum to foster a sense of morality, ethics, and respect for life. This includes respecting diversity, protecting human rights, and contributing to the sustainable development of society. In Malaysia, "Moral Education" (ME) is a compulsory subject taught in the public school system to non-Muslim students, focusing on developing ethical values and character through a dedicated curriculum that covers topics like self-development, family, society, and national identity;

3. CONCLUSION

Japanese philosophy of education emphasizes the development of the whole child-“complete education” to “lifelong learning”, and practical knowledge, respect for others, social training, and ethical behaviour. The education shifted to the formation of the “ability to self-educate” that supports lifelong learning, and onto practical use of basic knowledge, followed by a range of reforms of learning environments. National Philosophy of Malaysian Education (NPME) focuses on the values, beliefs and attitudes in relation to the growth process of individuals and society. These values, beliefs and attitudes determine the direction of education, particularly the aims, goals, objectives, content delivery and assessment of education.

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