

Chapter 13

Business Education Trends in Japan and America: Japanese Perspective Towards Entrepreneurship and MBA Programs

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ABSTRACT

This chapter shares the author's academic and career experiences in Japan and America and its influence on his perception towards business education, specifically MBA programs, in America. By sharing his experience, he will compare the business education in Japan and America and its differing perception of entrepreneurship. Comparing these two countries would highlight the current obstacles and future improvement for business education. Compared to business education in Japan, business education in America emphasizes the importance of entrepreneurship within its curriculum.

INTRODUCTION

Having lived in California for 17 years, I wanted more personal development by moving out of my comfort zone and decided to attend college in Japan to understand my career potential as a person with a bi-cultural background. Attending International Christian University (ICU) gave me an environment that emphasized cultural exchange engaging with people of diverse backgrounds. This liberal arts university allowed me to explore other majors and was known for its international environment to network with people of different nationalities. The school encouraged students to be involved in international programs such as study abroad which led me to attending exchange programs at Freie Universität Berlin in Germany and taking part in field works under ICU Peace Research Institute (PRI). In addition to promoting a global environment, I was attracted to the school's philosophy of critical thinking which was an uncommon concept among other Japanese universities. The curriculum challenged students to

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reflect on their career goal, academic interests, or other aspects in society. ICU's diverse student community and philosophy in critically thinking would influence my personal growth, academic interests, and career path.

Engaging with people of different nationalities at the campus, my interest in learning about global issues such as environmental sustainability policy or political issues in Asia led me to major in International Relations. I would apply my knowledge in field works and formulate my perspective on each political issue. PRI would allow me to participate in student forums in Korea to share my perspective on Korean-Japanese relations. Though I enjoyed learning about political theories, I felt that it would be difficult to apply that knowledge to the business world. Considering my career prospects, minoring in Economics provided me with general knowledge in business management and micro/macroeconomics. My interest in international business grew as I talked with American Professors who had professional experiences in International banks which made me critically reflect on my career goals in Japan and America. Interning at international companies would help me explore my career options and allowed me to apply my bilingual skills and diverse background.

Later, Weber Shandwick, a Public Relations Agency, offered me a chance to use my bilingual background for career development in Japan. The reason for not immediately attending a Master's program after receiving my undergraduate degree is so I explore career options and interests in Japan. For the past 18 months (including internships), I worked as an Associate PR consultant by working on brand marketing and crisis management for corporate clients in Asia-Pacific regions. Reflecting on my career and academic life, I felt the responsibility to play a pivotal role in bridging the Japanese and US markets. My colleagues and ICU's alumnus who pursued a master's degree abroad fueled my interest in post-undergraduate education. By attending school in different countries, they were able to explore other career paths abroad and broaden their perspective. Reflecting on ICU's philosophy, I wanted to find opportunities to improve my critically reflect on my career goals by exposing myself to a global academic environment. With that in mind, I decided to study under the MBA program in California State University of Long Beach (CSULB) to pursue this vision.

I was attracted by the university's MBA program as it tailored towards young professionals who had an interest in entrepreneurship. The program emphasized entrepreneurship as it hosted startup incubator programs and provided students with opportunities to plan your own startup firm. As I will mention in the later section of this chapter, Japan's business education lacks the promotion of entrepreneurship (Yokoyama, 2020). The absence of entrepreneurship education in Japan motivated me to seek an MBA degree from outside of Japan. CSULB would give me resources to explore the startup industry in California and expand my network with professionals in the industry. Unlike business education in Japan, I felt that this program aligned with my goals to become a business leader in both countries and critically view my business understanding in entrepreneurship.

Continuing to share more information about myself, this paper will examine my career and academic background to compare the business education in Japan and America. I'll analyze Japan's perception towards entrepreneurship and startup industry to offer a background in the country's business education. In addition, the paper would address my reasoning for attending an MBA program in California, my positive and negative experiences in the MBA program, and suggestions to enhance the MBA experience.

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