



Japanese work culture from Hofstede's perspective: An analysis of workers' experiences through social media channels

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ABSTRACT

Background: Japanese office workers are widely recognized for their discipline, innovation, and strong work ethic. These values reflect Japan's collective dedication to organizational and national advancement. However, this cultural rigor also creates psychological pressure and limited individual freedom. Understanding this phenomenon through Hofstede's cultural dimensions offers insights into Japan's distinctive work behavior. **Methods:** This study employed documentation and literature study techniques. Video interviews of six Japanese workers from the Takashi From Japan YouTube channel were analyzed using Hofstede's four cultural dimensions: power distance, collectivism vs. individualism, uncertainty avoidance, and masculinity/femininity. Supporting literature was reviewed to validate findings. **Finding:** Results reveal a high power distance, with workers showing strong obedience toward superiors and organizational hierarchy. Japanese work culture is predominantly collectivist, emphasizing group harmony and social contribution over personal interest. A high level of uncertainty avoidance leads workers to remain in rigid systems to minimize risk. Although less explored, masculinity is evident through hard work, self-sacrifice, and achievement orientation. Overall, the culture fosters stability and loyalty but often causes psychological strain and reduced personal expression. **Conclusion:** Japanese work culture is characterized by hierarchy, collectivism, and avoidance of uncertainty, reinforcing discipline and organizational stability while creating pressure and emotional fatigue among workers. **Novelty/Originality of this article:** This study offers a unique qualitative exploration of Japanese work culture through Hofstede's framework based on real worker experiences from digital media sources, providing fresh insights into cultural dynamics in modern Japan.

KEYWORDS: Japan; workers; job; experience.

1. Introduction

Japan is a country located in East Asia and is classified as a developed country. Japan consists of islands stretching from north to south, numbering around 3,000 islands. Geographically, Japan is bordered by the Sea of Okhotsk and the North Pacific Ocean to the north, the East China Sea to the south, the Pacific Ocean to the east, and the Sea of Japan, the Yellow Sea, and the Korea Strait to the west (Hartono, n.d.). Japan has four seasons: winter, spring, summer, and fall. Japan is famous for its cherry blossoms, which bloom in spring between March and April.

Japan is the first modern non-European country to be on par with European and neo-European societies across the ocean (the US, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand) in terms of living standards, industrialization, and technology (Diamond, 2022). Before the Meiji Restoration, Japan was ruled by military dictators known as Shoguns. Between 1639 and 1853, the Shoguns limited Japan's contact with foreigners in order to continue the history of Japan's founders. They imposed isolation by limiting contact and closing foreign traders

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in Japan. The Shoguns did this out of concern for European influence, especially in the realm of religion. The purpose of this system was to create an educated society capable of competing nationally and internationally, which would be useful for advancing the country.

Japan's progress was made despite its limited natural resources. Therefore, with these limitations, the Japanese government and society realized that building a country with insufficient natural resources could be aided by improving human resources. Japan was able to build a culture of high productivity with a strong work ethic in order to improve its economy and industry so that it could compete on the world stage. The influence of this strong work ethic is inseparable from the implementation of an organizational structure that uses a rigid leadership style. Employees are likened to machines. In other words, all control is held by the leader (Yustikasari, 2022).

The perseverance of the Japanese people that surprised the world was their economic recovery after the war. The most important role in the rapid development and economic growth was played by male workers who worked hard for the companies they worked for. Women were not left out of the economic recovery movement; they were behind the scenes, responsible for taking care of the household, from cooking, preparing equipment for their children or husbands, and meeting household needs while the men worked late into the night (Shindo, 2015).

Japan's progress was not achieved easily. After its defeat in the war, the Japanese people worked together to rebuild their country. One of the important factors in this development was the contribution of workers in Japanese companies. Generally, Japanese companies recruit the best graduates from universities as fresh graduates and then train them until retirement. These workers are expected to have a strong work ethic and be able to innovate in creating new products for the advancement of the company and the country. It is not surprising that various Japanese products, such as Toyota, Honda, Sony, Canon, and Panasonic, have been able to dominate the international market and are distributed in various countries.

The disciplined attitude of the Japanese people has led this country, nicknamed the Land of the Cherry Blossoms, to become a developed country in the Asian region. Japan can be compared to developed countries in Europe and America (Warsopurnomo, 2020). The culture of discipline practiced by the Japanese is a reflection of the knowledge, beliefs, morals, laws, customs, and abilities that have become habits among its people, shaping patterns of behavior and forming the social structure of society.

The behaviors that have been shaped by society have always existed from time to time because of a process of inheritance from generation to generation (Sukaimi & Said, 2018). Discipline, organization, and respect for punctuality are highly valued by the Japanese (Halwani, 2024). Japan has the word *kaizen*, which means continuous improvement. This improvement involves everyone, from managers to employees, and does not require a significant amount of money. *Kaizen* has become one of the keys to Japan's success in international competition. According to the Japanese, trying hard and working hard are part of life. For them, the time that passes each day is a new moment that must be used for change for the better (Fiana, Dahidi, & Sudjianto, 2018).

Being an office worker in Japan is not easy. Japanese workers have long working hours and are very loyal (Pribadi, 2020). As reported by CNBC International (CNBC International, 2018), Japanese workers are expected to devote all their energy, effort, and time to the company they work for. Japanese workers are reluctant to take all of their annual leave and choose to continue working. The same routine almost every day causes Japanese workers to often suffer from stress. They wake up early, jostle on the train, and work late into the night (Hiroshi, 2020). There is another phenomenon that is quite familiar in Japan, namely death due to overwork, known as *karoshi*. This concept shows that Japanese people are dedicated to discipline, hard work, and developing collectivism (Suprpto & Mohi, 2024).

Other studies explain that compensation in Japan reflects a systematic approach, consistent with the culture of discipline and order. Salaries are paid monthly between the 25th and 30th. In addition to monthly salaries, workers receive annual bonuses in the summer (July) and year-end bonuses (December), which are given based on individual

performance and business achievements. Overtime pay is also provided in accordance with applicable laws in Japan.

Workers also receive family allowances, health insurance, and transportation allowances, which are part of the compensation package to support the welfare of workers and their families. Income tax and social security deductions are automatically applied to employee salaries and are used to fund social protection and public services (Falah, 2025). In Japanese culture, the happiness of Japanese people is measured by collective success, both within the company and the family, rather than individual success (Damaruci & Wijaya, 2025).

The purpose of this study is to understand the experiences of workers in Japan through Takashi From Japan's YouTube videos. The analysis uses Hofstede's work culture theory, taking into account Japan's background as a former colonizing country that was defeated in war. To restore the devastated economy, Japanese society was encouraged to work hard based on deeply rooted noble values, such as the samurai spirit, dedication to seniors and companies, and a strong work ethic. However, behind this work ethic, many workers face heavy pressure, stress, and even depression in their daily lives.

Hofstede's theory explains the dimensions of work culture, such as power distance, collectivism, and uncertainty avoidance. These dimensions are relevant for analyzing the work culture in Japan, which is characterized by high loyalty to the company, a strong hierarchy, and a tendency to avoid risk. Previous research written by Henry Pribadi (Pribadi, 2020) also shows that being an office worker in Japan is not an easy thing to do. In addition to having to work hard to get maximum results, the work culture in Japanese companies is quite strange, namely working long hours but not showing high productivity.

2. Methods

The method used in this journal is qualitative. Qualitative research is a classification of social phenomena without statistical correlation measurements (Haryono, 2020). The object of this study is an interview video titled Working Life in Japan on Takashi from Japan's YouTube channel, while the subject of the study is the narratives and experiences of Japanese workers that appear in the video.

There are two types of data sources: primary data sources derived from video transcripts and secondary data obtained from theories and previous research results such as books and journals. Research data was collected through two techniques, namely documentation and literature study. The documentation technique was carried out to analyze the content of video interviews by workers uploaded to the Takashi From Japan YouTube channel (Takashii, 2024). This video was uploaded on October 12, 2024, which has been viewed 773 thousand times and liked by 13 thousand YouTube users. From this video viewing, it was then transcribed and analyzed using a qualitative approach.

In addition, this journal uses a literature study technique, namely by reviewing various written sources that are relevant to the research theme. These written sources include books, journals, articles, and other written documents. The theory used for analysis is the work culture theory from Hofstede (Liliweri, 2019).

Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Theory, which is divided into four points: power distance, collectivism vs. individualism, uncertainty avoidance, and masculinity femininity. The data analysis technique uses a model from Miles and Huberman which includes three methods; data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions (Hartanto, 2018). Data reduction was carried out by selecting important parts of the interview transcripts related to work culture dimensions. Data presentation was carried out by compiling quotations and findings in the form of narrative descriptions. Conclusions were drawn by linking the findings to Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory.

3. Results and Discussion

Japan is a developed country that has been able to harmonize traditional values with modernity. The beauty of its city parks reflects the harmony of tradition, while rows of skyscrapers showcase a sparkling modern face. Hundreds of years old temples are well maintained and serve as places of worship and cultural ceremonies. On the other hand, tall buildings are centers of work and innovation, representing efforts to improve people's lives.

Japan's success in post-war economic recovery was not easily achieved. Its people struggled to rebuild a devastated country, aware that revival must begin with themselves. This gave rise to the high level of discipline that characterizes the Japanese people. With this inherent discipline, Japan has been able to produce high-quality products that are distributed to various parts of the world and have a strong market share in many countries. Management in Japan is generally known to be market-oriented, focusing on manufacturing competitiveness (Supriono, 2022).

Workers in Japan are known to pay close attention to detail in every job they do. Even small aspects that are often overlooked by others are taken seriously (Wollah & Lumatauw, 2021). Therefore, it is not surprising that Japanese products often present new and superior innovations in the global market. Cotter and Hanley's 1995 paper (Barus, 2022) states that Japan views products and processes as imperfections that are always waiting to be perfected. In Japanese thinking, there is no such thing as "good enough" or "good enough" service, no matter how elegant, compact, inexpensive, and functional it may be, so they always provide the best service and quality without compromise.

Japanese society highly values punctuality, a culture that has been instilled since childhood through family, school, and social environments. This habit continues into adulthood and even old age. For foreigners visiting Japan, this culture of punctuality is evident, for example, in train and bus schedules that always arrive and depart on time. In fact, if there is a delay of even several seconds or minutes, the train operator will immediately apologize to passengers. In addition, the *Kaizen* culture is applied to improve employee performance. It consists of 5S from five Japanese words: *Seiri* (Sort), *Seiton* (Set in Order), *Seiso* (Shine), *Seiketsu* (Standardize), and *Shitsuke* (Sustain) (Falah, 2025).

The 5S concept was first introduced in Japan in the 1950s, particularly at Toyota, to improve production quality and efficiency in factories. Through this concept, it is hoped that there will be improvements, particularly in efficiency and products, through better organization and management of the work environment (Matondang & Setyabudi, 2025). The company where a person works not only acts as a provider of employment, but also as a provider of wages for the contributions made. Through work experience, individuals begin to understand the meaning of work as part of the maturation process, where work becomes a means of earning an income for their survival as adults. Therefore, they have a debt of gratitude that must be repaid by devoting themselves or being loyal to the company.

The work culture in Japan is interesting to study, one of which is the tendency for workers to stay with the same company from the time they join until retirement, unless certain problems arise. The teachings of the Bushido code of ethics, which emphasize high loyalty to one's master, make Japanese people highly value loyalty and responsibility, including to the company where they work. The awareness to obey the words of older people (*senpai*) or those with higher positions (*jooshi*) is very strong in the Japanese work environment. For an employee, the company where they work is likened to a master who gives them a lot of help (Wiyatasari, 2019). This section details the experiences of Japanese workers, with data obtained from the YouTube channel Takashii from Japan. The narratives shared by the informants were then analyzed using Hofstede's work culture theory.

In the interview said, a man 23 years old working as employee government in Japan disclose that He Still stay with his parents. With income around 3 billion yen per year, he realizes that wages the no will be sufficient for bear cost life in a way independent. However, because he still stays in the same house as his parents, his expenses are relatively low.



Fig. 1. Takashi's interview with workers in Japan

Takashi threw out question whether he was happy with his job at this moment, and informant 1 answered as follows:

"Actually, I like it. There is no overtime in my department and the boss enough okay, i think i have a sense of pleasure in the day, it's different with other countries, very difficult for enter a company in Japan need time For We enter it. But after You accepted you will too be difficult for go out or stop. Like I work in the government I still worker new and me Not yet own Lots Of experience but Friend my college Work until 10 pm and that's it very general So I get impression that overtime is something common happened. Previously There was cases where you don't pay moment overtime but Now company pay at the right minute" (Informant 1, 23 years working in government Japan).

"Yes, That right. My college friend has no other option, the existence of pressure for work hard. Pressure that truly there is, my boss No Once says that I must work until middle evening, but you must do that alone. I think that's its things that happen her." (Informant 1, 23 years working in government Japan).

Takashi observes that overtime has become commonplace in culture work in Japan. Although moment This overtime has paid, he emphasizes that the workers still No own option for reject or avoid it. Then, through Takashi interview asked to informant how about the 2nd experience informant 2nd about become jobs in Japan



Fig. 2. Takashi's interview with workers in Japan

Informant the 2nd answer, like following:

"I am 22 years old and I working in the real estate industry with wages around 3 billion yen per year. The cost of living in Tokyo is very high, for example food. We can buy a portion of ramen with price about 600 yen in Osaka, but You must pay 1500-yen moment is in Tokyo. That's why it costs here very tall." (Informant 2, 22 years working as a real asset agent).

Takashi gives question whether he feel like moment informant No like his job moment this and answered by the informant 2nd: “

I think so depends on what work you have. If the job that is something that is not make people happy so that as in the area ash ash. I still young and me Still new here but when see faces of people on the train they seen tired and not happy.” (Informant 2, 22 years working as a real asset agent).

Informant The 3rd is 65 years old and works in an IT company. In the interview session, the informant 3rd said that he liked his job moment this. With working in IT for him matter This make it always make something creative. Informant the 3rd also tells a story that at his age now he. No will hate his job he enjoys it with working for 200 hours per month



Fig. 3. Takashi's interview with workers in Japan

Informant 3rd share story about system jobs in Japan, as following:

“I'm into the showa era (Period time between 1926 – 1989). Achievement is mission first time. It is natural that this process needs time, and things that no can avoided. Although I am 65 years old, I am working 200 hours per month, that's it because mission is coming for the first time. Even if it matters if this need time that is no problem. But generations young now are not like that. Responsibility answer becomes very heavy, and I No own choice besides do it. So, this is all about how long the body does I can endure.” (Informant 65, 22 years working in IT Company).

Takashi gives question about whether environment working in Japan changed from the past to the present, answered by informant 3:

"Now there are strict limits on working hours monthly matter This different in the past. However, only because there is limitation monthly no means quality work has increased. So, this is all about balance between income and satisfaction. If satisfactory, you certainly love it. My son already grows big, but moment they are Still small, no care with my mental, me must work. It's a obligation. That's it why, like or whether with my job in the past, I think No problem prioritize the thing you like. What makes you like it? comfortable.” (Informant 65, 22 years working in IT Company).

Informant the 4th is a man 45 years old and works in the manufacturing industry. Informant to 4 share stories that in the present he likes his job. As following: *“I like my job because I work by contributing to society, I feel satisfied in that.”* In addition, the fourth informant explained how the system works in Japan:



Fig. 4. Takashi's interview with workers in Japan

Informant 4th share story about system jobs in Japan, as following:

"It's about the Japanese mentality because results aren't everything. For example, in the United States, if your performance isn't good enough, you'll be fired quickly. This doesn't apply in Japan. More than that, it's about the process. How you strive to work; it's more important to build the process than the results" (Informant 4, 45 years old and works in the manufacturing industry).

Takashi, as the interviewer, asked the fourth informant if he had ever experienced harassment in the workplace, whether in the form of excessive working hours or negative situations. The fourth informant replied:

"Honestly, I've felt that way. When I'm overwhelmed and my boss doesn't support me, I feel like I've been stabbed in the back. Instead, he criticizes me or demands more. I feel completely clueless about everything. It's very difficult for my mental health." (Informant 4, 45 years old and works in the manufacturing industry).

Takashi asked another question about whether informant 4 had ever been depressed and what he thought about the mistakes he made at work in the past.

"I almost had it happen. I thought it was my fault, but now I'm better and I think it was the company's fault." (Informant 4, 45 years old and works in the manufacturing industry).

Next, Takashi asked whether informant 4 enjoyed his job or not.

"I think it's entirely possible to be happy. Some people find fulfillment in their work, while others see it simply to make money. Some people prioritize hobbies or family life over job satisfaction. If their free time and family life are fulfilling, they can be happy no matter what" (Informant 4, 45 years old and works in the manufacturing industry).

Informant 5 is a 58-year-old Japanese worker in the travel industry. During the interview, informant 5 explained that his salary is around 7-8 billion yen per year. He said that if someone could earn 10 billion yen per year, they could live comfortably in a condominium. However, earning 7-8 billion yen per year is already above the average income in Japan.



Fig. 5. Takashi's interview with workers in Japan

Takashi then asked informant 5 whether he liked his job.

"I love it. Working in the travel industry allows me to interact with many customers, including those from abroad. I get to chat with general managers and hotel owners. It enriches my life. Of course, it might be better if you could earn a living from your hobby, but hobbies and jobs are different things. It's nice to make a living from your hobby, but when your hobby becomes your job, you start to dislike it. I think it has to be approached differently" (Informant 5, 58 years old and works in the travel industry).

Informant 6 is one of the people Takashi interviewed in channel YouTube. Salary earned informant 6 of 5 – 6 billion yen per year. Informant 6 took Spirit like dedicated samurai to motivate him to work. Informant 6 explained that he is someone who always thinks positive, but it turns out the job he does in the beginning at first makes him stressed. This stressful condition lasted a long time, and he now likes his job. As informant 6 said:



Fig. 6. Takashi's interview with workers in Japan

Takashi then asked informant 6 about different department, whether he liked his job.

"I like it now. I'm in a different department now than I was two years ago. I have more fun in the moment. It's enough to live comfortably on my own, but I'm still young and I don't spend too much. Japanese workers are incredibly serious. I think I've taken myself very seriously, and I think there's a mindset of doing what you're assigned to do. It's like the samurai spirit, which is still deeply rooted. It's not about the income; it's about responsibility and what I must do. I'm still a new employee, and I worked hard when I first started. I'm not someone who gets stressed; I'm a positive thinker, but I ended up getting stressed. I couldn't talk to people for a month, and that's what happened" (Informant 6)

After writing about the opinions of the informants who conducted the interview session on Takashi's YouTube channel, it is now analyzed using Hofstede's Cultural

Dimensions Theory, which is divided into four points: power distance, collectivism vs. individualism, uncertainty avoidance, and masculinity femininity (Liliweri, 2019). Power Distance explains the extent to which members view and feel their distance from those in power or the extent to which members view or feel the distribution of power (even or uneven) that they obtain from institutions, organizations, or companies.

Collectivism vs. Individualism explains to what extent the individual feels free to express himself independently of group they or culture its society. Dimension culture This explains to what extent the individual integrated into in group. Uncertainty avoidance is concept that explains to what extent members public feel No comfortable with situation uncertainty and ambiguity. Hofstede say that problem fundamental from dimensions This is How a society that always relate with fact see and feel how they no know what happens in the future. Masculinity and femininity are dimensions culture that explains distribution of "roles" emotional that is gender- oriented or explain personality men and women. Cultural factors very influence dimensions This It means How part big public make values traditional they side with the role man or women who can just each other contradictory intercultural. The following chart for make it easier understanding.

Analyzing the opinion of informant 1 with work theory. On the first point, Power Distance. As stated by informant 1, power distance is seen in the form of orders that are not spoken directly. This can be seen in that even though the boss or superior does not directly ask for overtime, employees still feel obliged to do so in order to meet the unwritten expectations of their superiors and the work system. In addition, the difficulty in leaving a job shows the strength of structural control within the organization, where employees do not have complete freedom to determine their career cycle. This reflects a strong and difficult to negotiate social hierarchy.

Table 1. Dimensional theory chart of culture Hofstede

Dimensions	Short Definition	Focus
Power Distance	The extent to which members of society accept the existence of power imbalances in institutions or organizations.	Power distance / hierarchy
Individualism vs Collectivism	The extent to which an individual feels free from the group and can express himself independently.	Independence vs. togetherness
Uncertainty Avoidance	The level of public discomfort with uncertainty and unclear situations.	Resilience to uncertainty
Masculinity vs Femininity	Distribution of emotional roles by gender.	Gender and social value orientation

The second point is Collectivism vs. Individualism. This statement shows that individuals are greatly influenced by group norms. Informants do not work according to their personal preferences, but follow the general patterns of their peers. Collectivist culture encourages people to adapt, conform, and not deviate from group norms, even if it causes personal hardship. The pressure to work hard does not come from official rules, but from very strong unwritten social norms.

The third point is Uncertainty Avoidance. High Uncertainty Avoidance is reflected in Japanese workers' reluctance to leave a rigid work system because they fear uncertainty and change. This was expressed by informant 1, who said that it is difficult to get into a Japanese company, but once accepted, it is difficult to leave or quit.

The fourth dimension, masculinity versus femininity, is not entirely relevant to analyze in the context of these interviews because all of Takashi's informants were men. However, this point will be discussed briefly in the discussion section.

Informant 2, Power Distance. Informant 2 did not directly mention the relationship with superiors or coworkers at work, but there was a quote that revealed that informant 2

was still new at work, which shows an awareness of their low position in the organizational structure. New employees often feel that they do not have enough authority to voice their opinions or express themselves openly in the work environment.

Collectivism vs. Individualism. The extent to which individuals feel free to express themselves. Informant 2 observed the surroundings and saw people on the train who looked tired after work. Informant 2 saw a common pattern in society, namely fatigue and unhappiness visible on people's faces, which has become an accepted social norm in Japan.

Uncertainty Avoidance: Informant 2 stated that if a job does not make people happy, it is like a gray area, reflecting the ambiguity between working for economic needs and working for personal satisfaction. This shows that work is not only a means of earning an income, but also requires readiness to face fatigue, adjustment to the organizational environment, and openness to criticism or suggestions from superiors and coworkers. At this point, the informant shows a tendency to avoid uncertainty in the future by persisting in harsh working conditions, because losing a job is considered a more detrimental risk.

Informant 3, Power Distance. Informant 3 revealed that regardless of his circumstances, work is an obligation. Even though he is 65 years old, informant 3 still works 200 hours per month. This statement shows that the informant feels he has no control over his workload and accepts the power structure even though it is not always in line with his personal opinion. **Collectivism vs. Individualism:** Informant 3 belongs to the Showa generation (1926–1989), which emphasized hard work, self-sacrifice, and achievement as individual contributions to the organization. Informant 3 said that regardless of his mental state, he continues to work for his family, community, and organization.

Uncertainty Avoidance: Even though he is 65 years old, Informant 3 still continues to work, which shows that he chooses a stable life by continuing to work even though there are several demands that need to be met. The tendency to work at an advanced age reflects an avoidance of uncertainty in the future rather than having to retire early or live a life with an unclear structure due to not working.

Informant 4, Power Distance. Informant 4 said that when he was tired, his boss did not provide support. This statement shows that the distance between superiors and subordinates is quite noticeable, especially the lack of support between superiors and subordinates in the organizational structure. The excerpt reveals that his boss demanded more, indicating that the boss was in a more dominant position even when subordinates were overwhelmed. **Collectivism vs. Individualism:** Informant 3 stated that he liked his job, which can be analyzed as meaning that the informant felt satisfied that his work was useful and made a social contribution.

Uncertainty Avoidance: Informant 4 reveals that he almost experienced depression due to pressure at work. However, he chose to remain in his job as a way of avoiding uncertainty in the future. For the informant, even though the work feels heavy, his family is a source of peace and a place to return to that can restore his spirit. This gives him the motivation to continue working, rather than facing the risk of not having a job and uncertainty about the direction of his life.

Informant 5, Power Distance. Informant 5 explained that he liked his job because he could interact with managers and hotel owners. This statement reveals that the informant has access to and closeness with highly authoritarian owners in the industry. Thus, it can be assumed that informant 5 does not experience high power distance in his work. **Collectivism vs. Individualism:** Informant 5 has the opportunity to interact with high-ranking officials in the company and with customers. For him, this situation gives him satisfaction because his work is not only for personal satisfaction but also contributes to society and the organization. Furthermore, for him, hobbies and work are different and must be separated, which shows that personal satisfaction is still separated from his professional role.

Uncertainty Avoidance, as expressed by informant 3, is that hobbies and work must be separated because when a hobby becomes a job, it is possible that in the future the person will come to hate their hobby. This statement illustrates that the informant avoids the emotional uncertainty that can arise when work and hobbies are mixed. He seems to choose to maintain emotional and professional stability by separating personal pleasure from

professional obligations. In doing so, he demonstrates an attitude of avoiding ambiguity and risks that may arise if the boundaries between work and hobbies become blurred.

Informant 6, Power Distance. This statement shows that as a new employee, the informant feels obliged to obey instructions and carry out tasks seriously, without question. This reflects an acceptance of the power hierarchy in the workplace, where those in lower positions are expected to submit to the rules and expectations set by their superiors or the organizational structure. Collectivism vs. Individualism: In the interview, Informant 6 revealed that Japanese workers are very disciplined, referring to the samurai spirit. This expression is still alive in Japanese society, namely working seriously, obediently, and with dedication to group or organizational tasks.

Uncertainty Avoidance, although informant 6 considers himself a positive thinker, he still experiences severe stress due to work pressure. This shows that there is an effort to avoid uncertainty, such as losing a job or failing to complete tasks, which leads to neglecting one's mental condition in order to maintain job stability and fulfill responsibilities.

Japan began to open up during the Meiji Restoration, a period of great progress in the country. The Japanese government modernized various fields. Young people were sent to Europe and America to learn about modern technology and industry. During this period, Japan also adopted the Gregorian calendar and changed its traditional dress to Western-style clothing (Abdurakhman, 2019).

Informant 1 said that his college friends worked until 10 p.m., which was common practice. Japan is indeed famous for its long working hours culture. In the contestation of work culture, an employee will greatly influence the company's performance. Long working hours policies are often not directly proportional to the productivity produced (Hirohsi, 2020). Long working hours cause many workers to feel tired and stressed, often leading them to choose to end their lives rather than endure a monotonous and harsh existence.

This is the case with informant 3, who is 65 years old and still works 200 hours per month. At that age, informant 3 still works as an office worker in the IT field. This is in line with previous research written by Aris et al. (2023), which states that as long as their bodies are still fit and their health is still good, Japanese people will continue to do what they enjoy and never truly retire. For Japanese people, working provides benefits and certainly gives them a purpose in life. Many Japanese people continue to work rather than choose to retire.

Japan is one of the countries in the world with a strong work ethic. The work ethic practiced by Japanese individuals has led Japan to become one of the countries with great technological advancement and mastery. Spirit and perseverance are characteristics of the Japanese people. As stated by informant 6, who has a high level of dedication to work, like the spirit of a samurai, "It is better to die than to live in shame" (Prasetiawan et al., 2018). This motto emphasizes that it is better to die than to live in shame due to actions such as not working hard or only doing the bare minimum without giving maximum effort in work or study. In addition to this trait, Japanese people also practice mutual assistance, resulting in a culture of *omoiyari*, "empathy and consideration for others" (Osawa, 2025).

Japan pays close attention to senior-junior culture in various spheres such as family, school, and work. When someone enters the workforce, they are not only required to be able to complete their work well, but also to be skilled at building relationships with other employees. In companies in particular, new employees are given low positions (Febrianty et al., 2023). As a senior, one is required to provide guidance to juniors. As experienced by informant 4, who experienced stress due to a heavy workload and a lack of support from seniors. It is understandable that employee stress arises from unfulfilled job satisfaction. Stress is a state of tension that affects a person's emotions, thought processes, and condition. Factors contributing to stress include difficult and excessive workloads, pressure, and unfair and unreasonable attitudes from leaders (Warsopurnomo, 2020).

For Japanese society, especially individuals in early adulthood who are not yet married, living in the same house with parents is still common, as is the case with informant 1. The high cost of living in Japan, especially in Tokyo, such as apartment costs, food, and other necessities, as mentioned by informant 2, is a major consideration for those who want to live independently. By continuing to live with their parents, young workers can save on

expenses and save from the income they earn. In addition, the high cost of living in Japan also has an impact on the declining birth rate because Japanese adults are reluctant to marry. As reported on the CNBC Indonesia YouTube channel on March 13, 2023 (CNBC Indonesia, 2023), one of the reasons for this is the increase in prices coupled with the fact that workers' incomes have not increased for several years. This has made Japanese people reluctant to marry and have children because they feel that raising children is too expensive.

Japanese men and women worked together to help Japan recover from the devastation of war. In the past, and even today, it is common for women to support their husbands behind the scenes by providing delicious and nutritious meals, taking care of household needs, and caring for children. Over time, there has been an increase in the number of women returning to work after marriage. According to data from 1980, there were 11.14 million households where only the husband worked, while there was a remarkable increase in households where both husband and wife worked, namely to 6.14 million households.

In 1992, the number of working husbands and wives increased. Then in 2010, there were 7.97 million households with working husbands and stay-at-home wives, while there was an increase in households where both spouses worked, reaching 10.12 million households (Shindo, 2015). The increase in workers from each household shows that there is a pattern in Japanese society shifting from traditional to more open. Women's participation in the workforce is based on various factors such as economic, socio-cultural, and developments over time.

The gender gap in Japan is still evident, as Stephen Krismanto (Krismanto, 2024) writes in his journal that Womenomics tends to give women direction as temporary workers who can be employed in the short term. The scope of work in Japan is known to be very demanding, requiring individuals to give their maximum effort to the company, which can be quite draining physically and mentally. Most companies in Japan demand a high level of loyalty from their employees. For these companies, they consider hiring women to be a bad long-term investment. This stigma stems from a patriarchal culture that places men in higher positions while women are considered too weak and emotional, making them more suited to taking care of the family.

4. Conclusions

Based on the analysis of six informants on Takashii From Japan's YouTube channel, it appears that Japanese work culture has strong characteristics as described in Hofstede's theory. First, in terms of Power Distance, the majority of informants indicated that there is a considerable power gap between superiors and subordinates. Although this does not always take the form of explicit orders, unwritten expectations still make workers feel obliged to obey the wishes of their superiors and the organizational structure. This shows that social hierarchy is very dominant in Japanese workplaces, although there are certain cases where power distance appears to be lower due to direct interaction with high-ranking officials.

Second, in terms of Collectivism vs. Individualism, Japanese work culture tends to be collectivist. Informants emphasized group interests, social contributions, and conformity to organizational norms over personal interests. Social pressure to work hard stems not only from formal rules, but also from social norms and customs that internalize a collective work ethic. Third, the dimension of Uncertainty Avoidance is very prominent. Almost all informants expressed a tendency to remain in a rigid work system in order to avoid uncertainty. Fear of the risk of job loss, ambiguity about the future, and uncertain changes make workers prefer to stay even though they face heavy physical and mental burdens.

Fourth, the Masculinity vs. Femininity dimension, although not explored extensively due to data limitations, is still reflected in the spirit of hard work, self-sacrifice, and achievement orientation that is still very much ingrained in workers. In general, Japanese work culture, as depicted in the informants' experiences, shows a hierarchical, collectivist pattern, full of avoidance of uncertainty, and oriented towards hard work and self-sacrifice. On the one hand, this culture supports organizational stability and high worker dedication,

but on the other hand, it often causes psychological pressure, fatigue, and limited space for individual self-expression.

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