

CHARACTERISTICS OF PEDAGOGICAL PERSONNEL AND THEIR ROLE IN CORPORATE TRAINING IN JAPAN

One of the most important tasks of a modern enterprise is to find ways to improve the result of production that depends on the level of human resource development. The owners of companies more often seek the ways of workers' adaptation to the modern demands of working place, much attention is paid to their professional growth. That is why the problem of mentors and supervisors' training, their influence on the professional development of personnel, their adaptation to the demand of a company has acquired the great importance in the society.

Some aspects of supervision have been analyzed in scholars' works. Issues of coaching labour force have been revealed in the works of K. Imano, T. Inoki, A. Kozlov, K. Koike, I. Miller, G. Popovich, V. Sidorov, L. Kruglova, M. Nagara, S. Yahata, and others.

In corporate training in Japanese companies coaching plays an important part in transferring professional knowledge and skills from a more experienced worker to a less experienced one by their communication during fulfillment of current tasks on the working place. The interesting fact is that the process of teaching goes on together with the process of widening a student's professional tasks. The main aims of coaching are: transfer of knowledge and skills; change of behavior; teaching the elements of corporate culture; development of the personnel potential; full use of a coacher's potential; improvement of interpersonal communication.

In the course of our research we found that differences between Asian and European countries lie in the way coaching is carried out on. For example in France as in most of the European countries, a graduate student is considered "a ready-made product of education", completely prepared for work with necessary qualifications, knowledge and skills. He integrates into a fixed arrangement of professional tasks that have conceptual character and consist in solving empirical problems. An engineer fulfills a controlling function. In Japan the beginning of every graduate student's working period is the time during which his professionalism is being

formed by the way of on-the-job-training. Traditionally in Japanese companies just hired workers learn all peculiarities of working place under the supervision of a more experienced instructor. In such a way new workers acquire knowledge about the contents of skills by copying the instructor's working style (K. Koike, T. Inoki). During this period their mastery is being built. It is considered that practical training begins with the moment of employment (K. Imano), that is why the period of adaptation to working place after education is so important (Lanciano C., Nohara H. 1993, p. 4).

At Japanese plants, supervisors play the part of "shock absorber" (H. Shibata), when in American companies team leaders fulfill this role. A Japanese worker fulfilling the duties of an instructor has a strong motivation to teach new workers necessary skills as his ability to teach others gains him additional points in his records. Such practice allows experienced workers to fulfill their professional duties together with the function of an instructor. An instructor's responsibility for teaching others lessens gradually together with acquiring necessary skills by a new worker (K. Koike, S. Yahata) (Mudiyanselage Saman Dassanayake 2005, pp. 25–26). In some European countries, for example in Spain, small and medium enterprises provide regular tutoring by a supervisor or mentor, informal training by other workers in their spare time (Skills development in the workplace: report of the ILO/SKILLS-AP/Japan Regional Workshop and Study Programme on Skills Development in the Workplace 2009, s. 30). In most enterprises of Taiwan experienced workers play fulfill a supervisor's duties, but the lack of enthusiasm is explained by the absence of necessary motivation (Yi-Hsuan Lee, Jie Lin, K.E. Paprock, S.A. Lynham, Jie (Jessica) Li 2004, p. 459).

According to the results of comparative research in Japanese companies, mentors have more influence on career development of managers than British supervisors, who use the method "sink or swim". According to it, British managers are exposed to intricate tasks and this method is different from the Japanese method of systematic career development under the supervision of an experienced worker, diminishing tension (Mudiyanselage Saman Dassanayake 2005, p. 26).

The choice of pedagogical personnel for corporate training is of great importance. Supervisors may be experienced workers on top positions, specialists from departments of a company, who graduated from higher educational establishments and have worked in this company not less than 4–5 years. They carry out the training of personnel and after the period of training they return to their departments. Also, workers who were trained at outside seminars (Takashi Kawakita 1996), or teaching personnel of educational establishments, specialists from other enterprises, experienced workers with high professional results and managerial abilities may be chosen for mentors. Training a new worker gives mentors an opportunity to improve their own competences. In Japanese companies such an approach is

called the “system of brothers and sisters” (Shigemi Yahata 1994). The peculiarity of this system lays in the fact that though those inexperienced and professionals carry out the same tasks of the working place, the more experienced worker gets a bigger financial reward, and career promotion for this teaching function (Taira Koji, S.B. Levine 1986, p. 38).

We should draw attention to the fact that the word *sensei* is widely used for pedagogical personnel in Japanese companies, which means “a teacher, instructor, a person who can observe, do supervising, provide support and feedback”. The role of the *sensei* has become understood as an element of Toyota culture. A *sensei* is, essentially, a personal coach and mentor. Someone who can guide, observe, and give feedback and encouragement (L. M. Miller. 2012).

The analysis of qualification characteristics of pedagogical personnel of Japanese companies shows that during the period of 2006–2007 in 66.8% companies (53.4% in 2006) the head of the department carried out training, and in 33.2% companies (46.6% in 2006) entrust training to the head of the division for regular workers. For irregular workers 55.2% companies (43.5% in 2006) provide training with the help of the head of the department, and 44.8% companies (56.5% in 2006) – the head of the division (Summary of Results of the Fiscal 2008 Basic Survey of Human Resources Development 2009, p. 22). So, the quantity of companies which prefer to train regular and irregular workers under the supervision of the head of the department increased. Nevertheless, it is considered inevitable that the importance of the head of the division in training workers will be increasing, and in 2010 this particular type of training prevailed (Summary of Results of the Fiscal 2008 Basic Survey of Human Resources Development 2009, pp. 21–22). It is explained by the fact that only heads of divisions know all peculiarities of the working process that their workers do, and only they can correctly judge their competence. They consider training the subordinates one of the most important tasks and realize it by motivation of the subordinates, development of their competence etc.

The training of pedagogical personnel may be formal and that means acquiring the license. The history of supervisors’ training for Japanese companies goes back to the beginning of the 1930s. After World War II the professional education Law (1958) laid the foundation for systematic training of pedagogical personnel for companies. According to the Law, the Ministry of Labour is responsible for general supervision. Instructors who get certificate can fulfill formal training in companies or state centers of professional development. By 1979 more than 733,000 instructors had got the license for training in different spheres of production (Taira Koji, S.B. Levine 1986, p. 51).

Besides, supervisors for on-the-job learning are trained according to the programs “Training within industry” (Report from “The Research Association on Life-long Career Development Support and Corporate Organization” 2007, p. 6). During

World War II, a process that has become known as Training Within Industry (TWI) and its component Job Instruction (JI) were developed and then adopted by Toyota as it developed its system of production. For management development Toyota and other Japanese companies added the role of the *sensei* or coach. These methods are effective because they are consistent with action-learning that recognizes the reality of how adults learn (Teacher Education and Qualifications 2012).

Three training programs, frequently called “J” programs (J stands for “jobs”), comprise Training Within Industry (TWI), along with a fourth program called Program Development. The three “J” programs are:

Job Instruction (JI). JI training teaches supervisors how to instruct the people doing the jobs. This training includes explaining to workers why their jobs are important; breaking down the job into logical steps and key points, and teaching the correct method of performing the task; confirming that the workers can do the task on their own; and following up to confirm that standard work is enforced. John Shook, senior advisor for the Lean Enterprise Institute, says Toyota still teaches job instruction in this fashion with little modification to the program.

Job Methods (JM). The Job Methods program was developed to provide management with a tool whereby supervisors could acquire skills in improving methods, according to the original training materials. JM can be described as the *kaizen* and continuous improvement component, says Patrick Graupp, senior master trainer at the TWI Institute and author of *The TWI Workbook: Essential Skills for Supervisors* [Graupp and LEI’s Shook participated in an IndustryWeek Webcast about TWI, Foundations of the Toyota Production System: Establish Standardized Work & Sustain Your Lean Initiative with TWI Training]. Key to the JM training is teaching supervisors how to make the best use of the people, technology and resources available right now.

Job Relations (JR). Original training materials describe job relations as a tool to help supervisors acquire leadership skills. This tool recognizes that job relationships are an important component of a supervisor’s job and provides instruction about how to address “people” problems, such as morale issues or grievances. While personnel issues may prove an uncomfortable part of a supervisor’s duties, Graupp notes that “without the cooperation of the people, not much is going to get done”. The original JR manual outlines a four-step process for meeting job relations situations that says: 1) get the complete facts about a situation; 2) weigh and evaluate the facts; 3) take action; and then 4) check the results of those actions (J. Jusko 2008).

Besides, teaching mentors set an example for newly hired workers, and though their personality may differ, the Japanese researchers Fujii, Kanei, Sekimoto describe it as follows: “In the world of work mentors teach the secrets of work, provide coaching, and serve as a model to copy. Their important role is career promotion of their subordinates by recommending them to powerful people in the company”.

On-the-job training requires a mentor special training and traits of character. We can make a conclusion that the main peculiarity of Japanese coaching is the establishment of warm and family-like relationships in the working team, and especially between a mentor and a subordinate.

A mentor is responsible for learning and adaptation of a new worker in the division. At this stage a mentor, besides above-mentioned, carries out the following tasks: explains the technology; introduces to the system of documentation; explains the principles of work of the corporate software, consults about current issues; advises sources of necessary information.

A mentor supervises his subordinate's professional activity, is responsible for working out his career development plan with set career goals, and their realization (Shigemi Yahata 1994). A worker's training for successful carrying out a particular type of work is also entrusted to a mentor. For example, managers who are going to fulfill a mentor's duties are taught how to plan and organize their subordinates' skills development, and in 29.3% of studied companies the managers were taught to draw up the individual plan of career development for every worker, which is discussed one or twice a year. Manager's ability to supervise the work and development of other workers is an important criterion and gains them positive scores in their individual records (Takashi Kawakita 1996).

At Japanese enterprises rotation is considered a very popular and effective form of professional training, which is widely used for either newly-hired or professional development of experienced workers. K. Koike says that a team leader is autonomous in distributing tasks during rotation due to specific knowledge and skills of this particular working team. During team-work personal relationships are established, all team members take an active part in concerted deal, and this fact has a positive effect on the result of their professional activity (Taira Koji, S.B. Levine 1986, p. 38).

A supervisor is also responsible for coaching, without which professional development of his subordinates is impossible. American researchers Jh. Dawson and A. Kadushin define the following supervisor's functions: educative, supportive, controlling. Educative function aims at encouraging worker to get new knowledge, informing and explaining, helping to find the correct decisions, advising, consulting, suggesting new methods, and in such a way improving a worker's mastery.

In May 2004 Harvard Business Review article (*Learning to Lead at Toyota*), Steven J. Spear does an excellent job, describing how a new manager is hired and trained at Toyota. His coach introduces him to the organization with structured observation and debriefing on what he sees. He is asked to find improvements, many each day, just from observing. Then he is asked to work on the line with an assembly team. He is asked to find improvements and work with the team implementing them. He is then taken to Japan to again work with a front-line team and

implement improvements, even in the very plant where the Toyota Production System began its development.

At each step the *sensei* is encouraging him, guiding and debriefing with him on the lessons he is learning. It is intensely personal and direct training and coaching. But, the *sensei* does little instructing in the traditional sense. Rather, he is creating experiences, asking questions, encouraging reflection (L.M. Miller 2012).

According to the studied literature, a supervisor's duties include creation of special surrounding atmosphere for better acquiring necessary knowledge and skills by fulfilling current tasks of the working place. A supervisor's ability to foresee the perspectives of his subordinates' professional development for the following 3–5 years is considered very important (Shigemi Yahata 1994).

As for difficulties in coaching and providing supervision Japanese researcher name managers' busy schedule as the main reason that prevents them from paying enough attention to the training, the lack of understanding the importance of on-the-job training from middle level managers' side (in 47.2% of studied companies). The problem of misunderstanding between workers of different ages as a negative influencing factor was mentioned by 31.9% of asked mentors (Takashi Kawakita 1996).

Besides, the lack of pedagogical personnel and absence of necessary education have their effect on the quality of corporate training. At average in the end of the 90s in Japanese companies the quantity of pedagogical personnel fluctuated about 0.5% in the average quantity of regular workers. The majority of these personnel did not have necessary academic education. 43.6% of Japanese companies considered it the main problem for further development of human resources (Takashi Kawakita 1996).

So, in corporate training in Japan pedagogical personnel play an important part in acquiring knowledge and skills by labour force. Mentors and coaches encourage workers to mobilize their inner abilities and potential, increase their competitiveness. Establishment of special relationships between a worker and his mentor provides good results in professional activity. Encouraging atmosphere that shows itself in support, cooperation and partnership, motivates creativity, appearance of new ideas and maintains stable base for corporate culture.

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