

## **Topics in Operations Management 1: Operational Excellence - Japanese**

### **Perspectives**

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### **Course description**

Some people argue that Japanese companies are excellent at operations. Toyota Motor Company has developed a system which arguably makes it possible to manufacture products with high quality, little inventory, and almost-zero defect rate – known as the Toyota Production System (TPS), which is nowadays taught at every operations management course at every business school around the world. Or, 3.5 million passengers use Shinjuku Station every day in Tokyo – by far the largest number in the world.\* In rush hours, trains arrive at and depart from Shinjuku Station every 3 minutes and they are rarely delayed.

Is there such a thing as “Japanese” operations management? If so, what is the essence of it? If so, does it mean that non-Japanese companies cannot implement “Japanese” operations management?

This course helps you rethink operations management from the Japanese perspective. The course focuses on “perspectives” of Japanese operations management, rather than quantitative analyses. As for the teaching method, students will learn through: 1) discussions based on original cases; and 2) discussions with guest speakers from Japanese companies.

Note: No specific knowledge of operations management is required. The course starts with a few introductory sessions on the basic concept of operations management, just in case a student has not yet taken a standard operations management course at his/her business school.

\* Before Covid-19.