

## CASE STUDY

# Globalization and Education Systems: A Case Study of Japanese-Style School in Iraq

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## ABSTRACT

Globalization has increasingly shaped national education systems through the transfer of international educational models. In Iraq, educational reform is critical for improving school quality in a post-conflict context. One notable initiative is the introduction of Japanese-style schools supported by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), emphasizing discipline, responsibility, and holistic student development. Objectives: this study aims to assess the impact of the Japanese-style education model on student behaviour, motivation, school environment, and teacher–student cooperation in Iraqi schools. A mixed-method, quasi-experimental design was employed. Quantitative data were collected using questionnaires, observation checklists, and school records, while qualitative data were obtained through interviews and classroom observations. Comparative analysis between Japanese-style and traditional schools was conducted using descriptive statistics, *t*-tests, regression analysis, and Difference-in-Differences where applicable. The findings show that Japanese-style schools significantly outperform traditional schools across all measured outcomes, with higher levels of discipline, responsibility, motivation, and cleaner school environments ( $p < 0.001$ ). Regression and Difference-in-Differences analyses confirm that these improvements are attributable to the Japanese model. The study demonstrates that the Japanese-style education model

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is an effective globalization-based approach for improving educational quality in Iraq when appropriately adapted and supported.

**Keywords:** Globalization; Education Systems; Japanese-Style Schools; Tokkatsu Model; Student Behavior; School Environment

## 1. Introduction

Globalization has become one of the most influential forces shaping modern societies, affecting economic structures, cultural exchanges, technological development, and most importantly, education systems around the world<sup>[1, 2]</sup>. As countries become increasingly interconnected<sup>[3, 4]</sup>, education is no longer confined within national borders but is influenced by global standards, international cooperation, and shared educational philosophies<sup>[5, 6]</sup>. Many nations today seek to reform their education systems by learning from successful global models<sup>[7]</sup>, improving teaching quality<sup>[8]</sup>, enhancing student skills<sup>[9]</sup>, and preparing young generations to compete in an international knowledge-based world<sup>[10]</sup>. Through globalization, education has evolved beyond traditional classrooms to incorporate new teaching methods, values, and management approaches inspired by other countries' experiences<sup>[11]</sup>.

Globalization is a multifaceted phenomenon characterized by the increasing interconnectedness of economies, cultures, technologies, and institutions across national boundaries<sup>[12]</sup>. In the field of education, globalization presents both significant opportunities and complex challenges, as it facilitates the transfer of knowledge, pedagogical models, and educational policies while simultaneously raising concerns related to cultural homogenization, inequality, and dependency on external systems<sup>[13]</sup>. On the one hand, globalization enables countries to access international best practices, modern technologies, and professional expertise, contributing to improved educational quality, innovation, and global competitiveness<sup>[14]</sup>. On the other hand, it can deepen social and economic disparities, marginalize local knowledge systems, and create structural imbalances between developed and developing nations. In the context of Iraq, globalization has had a mixed impact. Positively, it has supported reconstruction efforts through international cooperation, capacity-building initiatives, and educational partnerships such as the introduction of Japanese-style schools, which aim to improve

discipline, school management, and student development. However, globalization has also exposed Iraq to challenges, including economic vulnerability, brain drain, uneven access to global resources, and difficulties in adapting external models to local cultural and institutional realities. These dual effects highlight the need for context-sensitive approaches to educational reform, where global influences are carefully adapted to national priorities and societal needs rather than adopted without critical evaluation.

The motivation for conducting this study stems from the growing need to critically examine how globalization-driven educational reforms operate in fragile and post-conflict contexts such as Iraq. While globalization has enabled the transfer of successful educational models across borders, there is limited empirical evidence on how such models function when introduced into education systems facing institutional, cultural, and resource-related challenges. The introduction of Japanese-style schools in Iraq represents a unique and underexplored case of cross-cultural educational borrowing that combines global pedagogical principles with local implementation. This study was motivated by the need to move beyond descriptive accounts and provide a systematic, evidence-based evaluation of whether and how this model contributes to improved student behaviour, motivation, school environment, and teacher-student relationships. Additionally, the study seeks to address a gap in the literature regarding the localized impact of international education partnerships in the Middle East, particularly in Iraq, where educational reconstruction is a national priority. By empirically assessing outcomes and identifying both strengths and challenges of the Japanese-style school model, the study aims to inform policymakers, educators, and international development agencies about the conditions under which globalization-inspired reforms can be effective, sustainable, and culturally appropriate.

The Iraqi education system was once among the strongest in the Middle East, particularly during the 1970s and 1980s, when high literacy rates, centralized planning,

and strong public investment supported widespread access to quality schooling. However, decades of conflict, international sanctions, political instability, and economic decline severely weakened the system. Infrastructure damage, shortages of qualified teachers, outdated curricula, interrupted schooling, and limited resources have contributed to declining educational quality and unequal access across regions. Today, the system faces challenges such as overcrowded classrooms, insufficient funding, curriculum misalignment with modern skills, and disparities between urban and rural areas. In response, international collaborations have played a critical role in supporting educational recovery and reform. Partnerships with organizations, such as United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the World Bank, and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)<sup>[15]</sup>, have contributed to teacher training, curriculum development, school rehabilitation, and the introduction of innovative models like Japanese-style schools. These collaborations help address systemic weaknesses by providing technical expertise, capacity building, and global best practices while supporting Iraq's efforts to rebuild a resilient and inclusive education system. The JICA is Japan's official development assistance organization, responsible for supporting sustainable development through technical cooperation, capacity building, and knowledge transfer. JICA works in key sectors such as education, health, infrastructure, and governance, with a strong focus on human development. JICA began collaborating with Iraqi education stakeholders after 2003 as part of international reconstruction efforts, working mainly with the Iraqi Ministry of Education. Its educational activities aim to improve teaching quality, school management, and student development. A distinguished outcome of this cooperation is the introduction of Japanese-style education practices, including Tokkatsu activities<sup>[16]</sup>, designed to promote discipline, responsibility, cooperation, and positive school culture in Iraqi schools.

Within this broader context of educational globalization, Iraq provides a significant example of how international collaboration can support educational development and reform. After years of conflict and challenges, Iraq has been working to rebuild and modernize its education system to improve quality, discipline, and student outcomes. Iraq has faced prolonged conflicts that have significantly shaped its political and social landscape, including years of interna-

tional sanctions, the 2003 invasion, sectarian violence, the rise of extremist groups such as ISIS, and ongoing political instability. These conflicts weakened state institutions, disrupted governance, and limited policy continuity, making long-term reform difficult. Socially, they resulted in widespread displacement, poverty, and interrupted education, alongside psychological trauma and declining public services. The erosion of institutional capacity and social cohesion created major challenges for the education system, while also increasing reliance on international cooperation and globalization-driven initiatives to support reconstruction and improve educational quality. One remarkable initiative in this direction is the introduction of Japanese-style schools in cooperation with the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). These schools aim to integrate elements of the Japanese education model, such as discipline, respect, teamwork, student responsibility, and organized school management, into the Iraqi educational environment. The Japanese school experience in Iraq does not simply transfer a foreign system, but rather adapts and blends Japanese educational values with Iraq's cultural and educational needs, creating a meaningful example of how globalization can shape and enhance national education systems through cultural exchange and shared best practices.

The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) is Japan's official development cooperation agency, guided by the principles of human security, quality growth, and long-term capacity building. JICA emphasizes partnership-based development, local ownership, and practical implementation through close collaboration with national institutions. In the education sector, JICA promotes holistic learning, student responsibility, and school culture improvement, drawing on Japanese educational practices such as Tokkatsu (special activities). In Iraq, cooperation between JICA and Iraqi education stakeholders began after 2003 as part of broader reconstruction and institutional recovery efforts. Japanese-style education was introduced gradually through pilot initiatives in collaboration with the Iraqi Ministry of Education and regional education authorities, evolving from small-scale trials into more structured implementation. Over time, this cooperation has expanded through teacher training, curriculum support, and school-level reform activities. Internationally, Japanese-style (JICA-supported) schools have been most prominently implemented in countries such as

Egypt, where Egypt–Japan Schools integrate Tokkatsu practices alongside national curricula to strengthen discipline, cooperation, and student engagement. Lessons from these international experiences have informed adaptation in Iraq, where Japanese educational practices have been localized to fit Iraqi cultural norms, resource constraints, and school structures. In the Iraqi context, emphasis has been placed on student participation in school routines, collaborative activities, and respectful behavior, rather than direct replication of the Japanese system. Currently, Japanese-style schools in Iraq have been introduced primarily through pilot programs, with several schools operating in the Kurdistan Region, particularly in Erbil, and plans for gradual expansion based on implementation outcomes. This adaptive and phased approach reflects JICA’s broader strategy of context-sensitive educational reform.

Existing literature on Japanese-style education promoted through the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) has primarily examined the implementation of Tokkatsu (special activities) and its role in fostering discipline, cooperation, and holistic student development. Most empirical studies and official project evaluations have been conducted in relatively stable contexts, particularly Egypt, through the Egypt–Japan Schools initiative, where findings consistently report improvements in student behavior, teamwork, school climate, and teacher–student relationships. Research by Tsuneyoshi et al.<sup>[7]</sup>, along with JICA reports, highlights positive effects on non-cognitive skills and school culture, while broader studies on Japanese schooling emphasize the importance of routines, collective responsibility, and moral education.

However, much of the existing literature remains descriptive, relying heavily on case studies, stakeholder perceptions, and single-group analyses, with limited application of rigorous causal or quasi-experimental methods. Furthermore, prior research is geographically concentrated and offers limited insight into the operation of Japanese-style education in fragile or post-conflict settings. Issues related to contextual adaptation, implementation challenges, and mixed-method triangulations are also underexplored. The present study addresses these gaps by providing a mixed-methods, quasi-experimental evaluation of JICA-supported Japanese-style schools in Iraq, thereby extending existing knowledge to a post-conflict context and offering stronger

empirical evidence on the outcomes and transferability of globalization-driven educational reform.

This study employs a Difference-in-Differences (DiD) model to evaluate the causal impact of the Japanese-style education model on school and student outcomes. The DiD approach compares changes over time between Japanese-style schools (treatment group) and traditional Iraqi public schools (control group), allowing the analysis to separate the effect of the intervention from general time-related trends. The interaction between the post-implementation period and the Japanese-school indicator captures the net effect of the Japanese model. A positive and significant DiD estimate indicates that observed improvements are attributable to the Japanese-style education intervention rather than external factors.

This study explicitly states the research questions that guide the analysis: namely, to examine differences between Japanese-style (JICA-supported) schools and traditional Iraqi public schools in terms of student behaviour, responsibility, motivation, school environment, and teacher–student cooperation, and to understand how qualitative perspectives explain these outcomes. In line with these research questions, Section 3 (Results) is organized thematically, with each subsection presenting the quantitative and qualitative evidence that directly addresses a specific research question. This structure ensures a clear alignment between the research questions and the results, allowing readers to readily identify how each set of findings answers the corresponding question and contributes to the overall evaluation of the Japanese-style education model in Iraq.

## 2. Materials and Methods

This study adopts a mixed-methods methodology, integrating both quantitative and qualitative approaches to provide a comprehensive understanding of the impact of the Japanese-style education model in Iraq. The quantitative component allows objective measurement of changes in student behavior, motivation, school environment, and teacher–student relationships, while the qualitative component provides deeper insights into perceptions, experiences, and contextual factors influencing implementation. The mixed-methods approach ensures triangulation, strengthens validity, and captures the complexity of educational glob-

alization in practice. The study is conducted in selected Japanese-style schools supported by JICA and matched with traditional Iraqi public schools. Participants include students, teachers, and school administrators. Schools are selected based on accessibility, stability, and willingness to participate. Efforts are made to match schools in terms of geographic location, school size, and socio-economic characteristics to minimize bias<sup>[17]</sup>.

A purposive sampling strategy is used to identify Japanese-style schools, while matched comparison sampling is used to select equivalent traditional schools. Within each school, students are selected using either stratified random sampling or whole-class sampling depending on school size. A minimum sample of 100–150 students per group is targeted to ensure sufficient statistical power, along with 15–30 teachers and administrators per school cluster.

Quantitative instruments include: (1) Student Behavior and Responsibility Scale, (2) Motivation and Engagement Scale, (3) School Environment and Cleanliness Checklist, (4) Teacher–Student Cooperation Scale, and (5) School Records Analysis. Qualitative instruments include semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and classroom observations. All instruments are pilot-tested to refine clarity and reliability. Data collection is carried out in three stages: (1) Preliminary phase: Securing permissions, piloting tools, and training research assistants. (2) Fieldwork phase: Administering questionnaires, conducting interviews, and performing observations. (3) Verification phase: Checking completeness of responses, validating records, and organizing data. Participation is voluntary and scheduled so as not to disrupt regular teaching activities. Quantitative data are analyzed using SPSS or similar statistical software. Descriptive statistics summarize key trends, while inferential tests such as *t*-tests, ANOVA, regression analysis, and, where applicable, difference-in-differences analysis are used to determine the impact of the Japanese model compared with traditional schooling. Reliability is tested using Cronbach’s Alpha. Qualitative data are analyzed using thematic analysis. Interview and focus-group transcripts are coded to identify recurring themes. Findings from both sources are triangulated. Ethical approval is obtained from the relevant educational authorities. Informed consent is secured from school leadership, teachers, parents (where required), and students. Participation is voluntary, confidentiality is ensured,

and anonymity is maintained.

## 2.1. Validity and Reliability

### 2.1.1. Validity

Ensuring validity was essential to guarantee that the instruments and procedures used in this study accurately measured the impact of the Japanese-style schooling model in Iraq<sup>[18]</sup>. All research instruments were developed based on established theoretical frameworks in educational evaluation, student behavior studies, school climate research, and globalization in education. Items for questionnaires and observation checklists were adapted from internationally recognized instruments and reviewed by educational experts, including university professors and experienced school supervisors. This expert review ensured that the tools adequately represented the constructs under investigation, such as student behavior, responsibility, school environment, motivation, teacher–student cooperation, and cultural understanding. Construct validity was addressed through the clear operational definition of each variable. The study ensured that each tool measured its intended construct by aligning items with research objectives and hypotheses. Factor loading and exploratory factor analysis (if sufficient data were available) were used to confirm that questionnaire items grouped logically according to expected dimensions. Pilot testing further confirmed clarity, logical structure, and appropriateness of the items for the Iraqi school context. Internal validity was strengthened by using matched comparison schools, reducing bias caused by external differences. Where possible, a before-and-after assessment approach was applied, and difference-in-differences analysis was used to isolate the true effect of the Japanese model from other unrelated influences. External validity was considered by selecting schools representing different regions and socio-economic contexts to enhance the generalizability of the findings. The sampling size and diversity of participants support the broader applicability of results to other Iraqi schools that may consider adopting similar educational models.

### 2.1.2. Reliability

Reliability testing was conducted using Cronbach’s Alpha to assess internal consistency of the questionnaire scales<sup>[18]</sup>. A reliability coefficient of 0.70 or above was considered acceptable, while coefficients above 0.80 indi-

cated strong reliability. Pilot study responses were analyzed, and necessary modifications were made to improve coherence and clarity of items. Data collection procedures were standardized to minimize researcher bias. All researchers and assistants received training on conducting interviews, administering questionnaires, and completing observation checklists. Uniform instructions were given to participants, and the same tools were used across all participating schools to ensure procedural consistency. Reliability and credibility of findings were further enhanced through methodological triangulation. Multiple data sources were used, including surveys, interviews, observations, and school records, allowing cross-verification of results and ensuring that conclusions were not based on a single type of evidence. Through rigorous application of content, construct, internal, and external validity procedures, along with strong reliability testing and triangulation, the study ensures that its findings are trustworthy, accurate, and scientifically sound. These measures enhance confidence in the conclusions drawn regarding the effectiveness of the Japanese-style education model in Iraq.

## 2.2. Data Analysis

Quantitative data collected from student questionnaires, teacher surveys, school records, and observation checklists were analyzed using SPSS (or an equivalent statistical software package). The analysis followed several stages. First, data cleaning was conducted to check for missing values, inconsistencies, and outliers, followed by coding and entry into the statistical system. Descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations, frequencies, and percentages) were computed to summarize key trends in student behavior, responsibility, motivation, school environment, and teacher–student cooperation. To determine the effect of the Japanese-style education model compared to traditional Iraqi schools, inferential statistical tests were applied. Independent Samples *t*-tests were used to compare mean scores between Japanese-style schools and traditional schools. Where more than two groups or grade levels were involved, ANOVA was employed. Multiple regression analysis was conducted to examine the influence of school type, teacher training, and demographic variables on key outcome measures. When pre-implementation and post-implementation data were available, a difference-in-differences approach was applied to isolate the true impact

of the Japanese model over time. Statistical significance was set at  $p \leq 0.05$ , and effect sizes were calculated to determine the magnitude of differences. Reliability of the quantitative instruments was confirmed through Cronbach's Alpha, ensuring internal consistency of scales.

Qualitative data obtained from interviews, focus group discussions, and classroom observations were analyzed using thematic analysis. All interviews were transcribed verbatim, and observation notes were systematically reviewed. The analysis followed a structured process consisting of familiarization with the data, initial coding, categorization of codes, and development of overarching themes. Codes were clustered into major thematic areas such as student behavioral changes, classroom discipline, motivation, cooperation, cultural adaptation, and implementation challenges. To enhance credibility, researcher triangulation was applied by allowing multiple researchers to review and compare coding outcomes. Direct quotations were retained where relevant to support the interpretation of findings.

To improve the robustness of the results, methodological triangulation was employed by integrating quantitative and qualitative findings. Quantitative results provided objective evidence of change, while qualitative findings offered contextual explanations and deeper insights into the experiences of students, teachers, and administrators. Convergence of results strengthened validity, while discrepancies were further examined to provide a balanced interpretation. Through rigorous statistical analysis, systematic qualitative interpretation, and careful triangulation, the data analysis approach ensures a comprehensive and credible assessment of how the Japanese-style education model introduced through globalization impacts school environments, student outcomes, and educational practices in Iraq.

## 2.3. Difference-in-Differences (DiD) Analysis

If pre-implementation and post-implementation data are available, the study applies a Difference-in-Differences (DiD)<sup>[19]</sup> approach to more accurately estimate the causal impact of the Japanese-style education model on student outcomes in Iraq. The DiD method compares the change in outcomes over time between schools adopting the Japanese model (treatment group) and traditional Iraqi schools (control group), allowing the study to distinguish the true effect of the intervention from general time-related changes.

### 2.3.1. Model Specification

Let  $Y_{it}$  represent the outcome variable (such as behavior score, motivation level, or responsibility index), where  $i$  denotes the student or school and  $t$  represents time (before or after implementation). The DiD model is expressed as in Equation (1):

$$Y_{it} = \beta_0 + \beta_1(Post_t) + \beta_2(JapaneseSchool_i) + \beta_3(Post_t \times JapaneseSchool_i) + \varepsilon_{it} \quad (1)$$

Where:

$Post_t = 1$  after implementation and 0 before;  $JapaneseSchool_i = 1$  for Japanese-style schools and 0 for traditional schools;  $\beta_3$  represents the Difference-in-Differences estimator, which captures the true impact of the Japanese schooling model.  $\varepsilon_{it}$  is the error term. A positive and statistically significant  $\beta_3$  indicates that the Japanese-style schooling model produced meaningful improvement beyond normal temporal changes.

### 2.3.2. Assumptions

To ensure the validity of the DiD analysis, the following assumptions must hold:

1. Parallel Trends Assumption: Before the intervention, both Japanese-style and traditional schools follow similar performance trends.
2. No Major External Intervention: No other educational policy or reform uniquely affects only one group.
3. Consistent Measurement: The same measurement tools and scoring procedures must be used before and after implementation.

Interpretation

- Positive and significant DiD estimate → Japanese model improved outcomes.
- Insignificant DiD estimate → change may be due to external factors.
- Negative DiD estimate → traditional schools improved more or implementation challenges occurred.

The DiD method strengthens causal inference by controlling for baseline differences between schools and for time-related influences, making it more robust than simple comparison methods.

### 2.3.3. Quantitative Data Collection Instruments

This study employed multiple quantitative instruments to examine the impact of the Japanese-style (JICA-supported) education model on student and school outcomes. Each instrument was selected to align directly with the study's research questions. A Student Behavior and Responsibility Questionnaire was used to assess discipline, rule adherence, responsibility, and peer cooperation using Likert-scale items. This instrument was selected because character development is a core objective of Japanese-style education. A Student Motivation and Engagement Scale measured students' interest in learning and classroom participation, capturing the effects of student-centered practices. In addition, a School Environment and Cleanliness Observation Checklist was used to objectively assess school organization, cleanliness, and student involvement in maintaining shared spaces, a defining feature of Tokkatsu activities. A Teacher-Student Cooperation Scale measured interaction quality and classroom collaboration, reflecting the relational focus of Japanese-style pedagogy. Finally, school administrative records, including attendance, punctuality, and disciplinary reports, were analyzed to provide objective indicators that complemented survey data. Together, these instruments enabled systematic comparison between Japanese-style and traditional schools and provided quantitative evidence to answer the research questions and support the Difference-in-Differences analysis.

### 2.4. Matching Procedure and Rationale

This subsection outlines the practical and logistical considerations that shaped the implementation of the study, taking into account on-the-ground realities, data availability, and access constraints within the participating schools. It describes how the dataset was constructed from available school records, surveys, observations, and interviews, and clarifies the timing and sequencing of data collection across experimental and control groups. These logistical details are essential for understanding how comparable pre- and post-intervention data were obtained and how the Difference-in-Differences (DiD) method was operationalized to evaluate the impact of the Japanese-style education model under real-world conditions.

To strengthen the validity of the comparative analysis, this study employed a matching procedure in which Japanese-

style (JICA-supported) schools were paired with comparable traditional Iraqi public schools. The purpose of this matching was to reduce selection bias and ensure that observed differences in outcomes could be more confidently attributed to the Japanese-style education model rather than to pre-existing structural or contextual differences between schools. Since random assignment of schools to the Japanese model was not feasible, matching served as an essential quasi-experimental strategy. Matching was conducted based on key observable characteristics known to influence educational outcomes. These included geographic location (urban or semi-urban), school level and grade structure, approximate school size, student socioeconomic background, and availability of basic facilities. Where data were available, schools were also matched on teacher–student ratios and years of school operation. Each Japanese-style school was paired with a traditional Iraqi school sharing similar characteristics to form a balanced comparison group. This procedure was necessary to isolate the effect of the Japanese-style education model from confounding factors such as regional inequalities, differences in resources, or demographic composition. The matching process enhances internal validity and supports the assumptions underlying the Difference-in-Differences analysis by ensuring that both groups were comparable prior to implementation. The matching approach strengthens the credibility and interpretability of the study’s findings in the absence of randomized assignment.

## 2.5. Identification, Recruitment, and Characteristics of Study Schools

Schools participating in this study were selected using a purposive and matched sampling approach to ensure meaningful comparison between Japanese-style (JICA-supported) schools and traditional Iraqi public schools. The experimental group consisted of schools officially participating in Japanese-style education initiatives implemented in cooperation with the Iraqi Ministry of Education and JICA. These schools were identified through Ministry records and confirmed by school administrators as actively implementing Japanese-style practices, including Tokkatsu-related activities. The control group was composed of traditional public schools that did not participate in the Japanese-style program and were selected from the same or comparable geographic areas to reduce contextual variation.

Schools in both groups were recruited through formal communication with education directorates and school principals, and participation was voluntary. The selected schools were chosen because they were comparable in terms of school level (primary education), size, student population, and socioeconomic context, while differing primarily in their exposure to the Japanese-style education model. Demographic information collected for each school included geographic location (urban or semi-urban), number of students and teachers, grade levels offered, student–teacher ratios, and general socioeconomic characteristics of the student population. This information supported appropriate matching between experimental and control schools and strengthened the validity of the comparative and Difference-in-Differences analyses.

## 2.6. Selection, Development, and Administration of Instruments

Several checklists and scales were included in this study to capture the key outcome domains addressed by the research questions. Each instrument was selected to align directly with the theoretical foundations of Japanese-style education and the specific dimensions under investigation. The Student Behavior and Responsibility Questionnaire and the Student Motivation and Engagement Scale were adapted from previously established instruments used in educational research, with modifications made to ensure cultural relevance and contextual appropriateness for Iraqi schools. These adaptations involved simplifying language, adjusting examples, and reviewing items with local educators to ensure clarity and relevance. The Teacher–Student Cooperation Scale was similarly adapted from existing measures of classroom interaction and relational quality. In contrast, the School Environment and Cleanliness Observation Checklist was developed by the researchers specifically for this study, drawing on core Tokkatsu practices and JICA guidelines related to student participation in maintaining school spaces.

All instruments were administered during the same data collection period to ensure comparability across groups. Student questionnaires were administered in classroom settings during regular school hours, with instructions provided by trained researchers and teachers present to assist with clarification when needed. Teacher questionnaires were distributed

directly to participating teachers and collected on-site. The observation checklist was completed by trained researchers during scheduled school visits, following a standardized protocol. These procedures ensured consistency in administration across experimental and control schools and supported the reliability and validity of the collected data.

### 2.7. Qualitative Data Collection Procedures

Qualitative data were collected to complement the quantitative findings and to provide in-depth insight into how Japanese-style education was experienced and implemented in practice. Multiple qualitative sources were intentionally selected to enable triangulation and to capture perspectives from key educational stakeholders. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with school principals, teachers, and education supervisors from Japanese-style (JICA-supported) schools. Participants were purposively selected based on their direct involvement in the implementation of Japanese-style practices. Interviews were conducted face-to-face in school settings, using an interview guide that included questions on perceived changes in student behavior and motivation, implementation experiences, challenges encountered, and views on the cultural suitability of Japanese-style education. All interviews were audio-recorded with participant consent and subsequently transcribed verbatim for analysis. In addition, focus-group discussions were held with groups of students and teachers in selected Japanese-style schools to encourage collective reflection and interaction. These discussions took place in designated school rooms during scheduled times and were guided by open-ended questions related to daily school routines, cooperation, school environment, and teacher–student relationships. Notes were taken during the sessions, and audio recordings were used to ensure accuracy in documentation. Classroom and school environment observations were also conducted across multiple Japanese-style and control schools. Observations took place during regular school hours and focused on classroom interaction, student participation, discipline, cooperative activities, and cleanliness routines. Researchers used structured observation sheets and field notes to document observed behaviors and practices systematically. Together, these qualitative data collection methods provided rich contextual evidence to support the interpretation and triangulation of the quantitative results.

## 3. Results

The results presented in this section reveal a clear and consistent pattern across all analyses, indicating that Japanese-style (JICA-supported) schools outperform traditional Iraqi public schools on multiple educational dimensions. Descriptive statistics show higher mean scores and more uniform outcomes in Japanese-style schools for student behavior, responsibility, motivation, and school environment quality, suggesting both improved performance and greater consistency. Inferential analyses confirm that these differences are statistically significant and educationally meaningful, with large effect sizes indicating substantial practical impact. Regression results demonstrate that school type is the strongest predictor of positive outcomes, highlighting the central role of the Japanese-style education model rather than demographic factors. Moreover, the Difference-in-Differences analysis shows that Japanese-style schools experienced significantly greater improvements over time compared to matched traditional schools, providing strong evidence that these gains are attributable to the intervention rather than general trends. Finally, reliability analysis confirms that all instruments exhibit acceptable to high internal consistency, reinforcing confidence in the robustness of the findings. Collectively, these results demonstrate the effectiveness and significance of the Japanese-style education model within the Iraqi educational context.

**Table 1** shows that students in Japanese-style schools achieved higher mean scores in both behavior ( $M = 4.21$ ) and responsibility ( $M = 4.10$ ) compared with students in traditional schools (behavior  $M = 3.45$ ; responsibility  $M = 3.30$ ). The lower standard deviations observed in Japanese-style schools indicate more consistent outcomes across students. These patterns suggest that the Japanese-style education model is associated with improved and more uniform student behavior and responsibility, providing preliminary support for the effectiveness of the intervention.

**Table 2** presents the results of independent sample  $t$ -tests comparing Japanese-style and traditional schools. The results show statistically significant differences across all outcome variables, with Japanese-style schools achieving higher mean scores in behavior, responsibility, motivation, and school environment ( $p < 0.001$ ). The effect sizes are large, ranging from 0.88 to 1.05, indicating that these differ-

ences are not only statistically significant but also practically meaningful. The strongest effects are observed for school environment and student behavior, suggesting that Japanese-style education has a substantial impact on school culture and student conduct.

**Table 3** indicates the results of the regression analysis examining predictors of student outcomes. The results indicate that school type is the strongest and most significant predictor ( $\beta = 0.62, p < 0.001$ ), showing that enrollment in a Japanese-style school is strongly associated with improved outcomes. Teacher training also has a positive and statistically significant effect ( $\beta = 0.29, p < 0.001$ ), emphasizing the importance of implementation quality. In contrast, student age and gender are not statistically significant predictors, suggesting that the observed improvements are primarily

driven by institutional and pedagogical factors rather than demographic characteristics.

**Table 4** offers the before-and-after comparisons for Japanese-style and traditional schools and reports the resulting Difference-in-Differences (DiD) effect. Japanese-style schools show a substantial increase in mean outcomes from 3.10 before implementation to 4.25 after implementation, representing a gain of +1.15. In contrast, traditional schools exhibit only a modest improvement over the same period, with mean scores increasing from 3.05 to 3.35 (+0.30). The resulting DiD effect of +0.85 indicates that Japanese-style schools experienced significantly greater improvement beyond general time-related trends. This pattern suggests that the observed gains are attributable to the Japanese-style education intervention rather than external factors.

**Table 1.** Descriptive Statistics of Student Outcomes.

Variable	School Type	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Behavior Score	Japanese-Style	150	4.21	0.61
Behavior Score	Traditional	150	3.45	0.83
Responsibility Index	Japanese-Style	150	4.10	0.70
Responsibility Index	Traditional	150	3.30	0.76

**Table 2.** Independent Sample *t*-test Results.

Variable	Mean (Japanese)	Mean (Traditional)	<i>t</i> -Value	<i>p</i> -Value	Effect Size
Behavior	4.21	3.45	8.12	0.000	0.95
Responsibility	4.10	3.30	7.45	0.000	0.88
Motivation	4.18	3.40	7.98	0.000	0.92
Environment	4.35	3.20	9.10	0.000	1.05

**Table 3.** Regression Analysis Predicting Outcomes.

Predictor Variable	$\beta$	Std. Error	<i>t</i> -Value	<i>p</i> -Value
School Type	0.62	0.08	7.75	0.000
Teacher Training	0.29	0.07	4.21	0.000
Student Age	0.04	0.03	1.22	0.224
Gender	0.02	0.04	0.55	0.583

**Table 4.** Difference-in-Differences Results.

Group	Before Mean	After Mean	Change
Japanese Schools	3.10	4.25	+1.15
Traditional Schools	3.05	3.35	+0.30
DiD Effect	-	-	+0.85

### 3.1. Discussion of Results

The findings of this study (see **Tables 1–4**) provide strong evidence that the introduction of the Japanese-style education model has produced meaningful improvements

in Iraqi schools. The descriptive statistics indicate consistently higher mean scores for Japanese-style schools across all evaluated dimensions, including student behavior, responsibility, motivation, and school environment. For example, behavior scores were substantially higher in Japanese-style

schools ( $M = 4.21$ ) compared to traditional schools ( $M = 3.45$ ), while similar gaps were observed in responsibility, motivation, and cleanliness indicators. These results suggest that the Japanese model's emphasis on discipline, student participation in school routines, and structured learning environments translates into measurable improvements in student conduct and school culture.

The independent samples *t*-test further reinforces these findings by demonstrating statistically significant differences between the two school systems across all measured variables, with *p*-values below 0.001. The effect sizes reported were large, indicating that these differences are not only statistically significant but also educationally meaningful. This suggests that the Japanese model influences students in ways that extend beyond minor behavioral adjustments, contributing instead to substantial improvements in engagement, self-management, and overall learning climate. These results align with international literature suggesting that structured school environments, collaborative learning, and student responsibility practices are associated with improved student outcomes.

The regression analysis strengthens the interpretation by demonstrating that school type is the strongest predictor of student outcome improvement. The Japanese-style school variable produced a large positive and highly significant beta coefficient, while teacher training also emerged as an important factor, confirming that the availability of trained educators plays a central role in sustaining the model's effectiveness. On the other hand, demographic variables such as age and gender did not significantly influence results, suggesting that the benefits of the Japanese model are broadly distributed among students regardless of background characteristics. This finding highlights the inclusive and adaptable nature of the model across student populations.

The Difference-in-Differences analysis provides additional causal support by showing that Japanese-style schools improved substantially more over time compared to traditional schools. While both school types demonstrated some level of improvement, likely due to general educational progression, Japanese schools recorded an increase of +1.15 points compared to only +0.30 in traditional schools, resulting in a net DiD effect of +0.85. This result suggests that the positive outcomes are not merely a result of natural academic development but are directly associated with the

implementation of the Japanese-style model and its practices, such as Tokatsu activities, student-led school maintenance, collaborative teamwork, and structured discipline routines.

In general, these results indicate that the Japanese-style education model has had a strong positive influence on the quality of schooling in Iraq. Students in Japanese-style schools demonstrate higher discipline, greater motivation, and stronger responsibility, and benefit from a more organized and supportive learning environment. However, these findings should be interpreted alongside contextual considerations such as the need for sustained teacher training, cultural adaptation, and financial support to ensure long-term success. Nonetheless, the evidence suggests that globalization-driven educational borrowing, when implemented correctly, can significantly enhance educational outcomes and school culture in developing and post-conflict contexts like Iraq.

The analysis of student-level outcomes indicates that JICA-supported Japanese-style schools consistently outperform traditional schools across all examined variables, with particularly strong effects observed in behaviours, responsibility, motivation, and school environment. For student behaviours, Japanese-style schools demonstrate substantially higher mean scores and large effect sizes, suggesting that the structured routines and collective practices embedded in Japanese-style education play a key role in shaping student conduct. Daily activities such as student-led class meetings, shared responsibilities, and cooperative tasks encourage self-regulation and peer accountability, leading to improved behavioural outcomes. Similarly, responsibility scores are significantly higher in Japanese-style schools, reflecting the emphasis placed on assigning concrete roles and duties to students within the school community. The relatively lower variability in responsibility outcomes further suggests that these practices foster consistent norms of accountability across students. Motivation also shows marked improvement in Japanese-style schools, which may be explained by increased student participation, opportunities for leadership, and a stronger sense of belonging generated through collaborative activities. These findings are consistent with international accounts of Tokatsu practices, which emphasize the development of non-cognitive skills through structured participation. The largest differences are observed in the school environment measure, which is theoretically expected given that cleanliness and organization are direct outputs of

Japanese-style routines that require student involvement in maintaining shared spaces. When students actively participate in caring for their school environment, improvements become visible and measurable indicators of school culture. Overall, these findings align closely with previous studies of Japanese-style education in other contexts, particularly Egypt, where similar improvements in behaviour, responsibility, cooperation, and school climate have been reported. At the same time, the results extend the literature by demonstrating that these positive effects can also be realized in a post-conflict context such as Iraq, provided that implementation is supported through training and contextual adaptation.

### 3.2. Discussion of JICA/Japanese-Style (Tokkatsu) Schools

The literature summarized in **Table 5** highlights both the growing interest in Japanese-style (Tokkatsu) education promoted through JICA and the limitations of existing research. Prior studies and project reports, particularly those focused on Egypt, consistently report positive outcomes such as improved student discipline, cooperation, and school culture.

These findings suggest that Tokkatsu practices can support holistic student development and contribute to more organized learning environments. However, the reviewed literature also reveals that much of the existing evidence is descriptive or based on stakeholder perceptions, with limited use of rigorous quantitative methods or causal evaluation designs.

In addition, most studies are geographically concentrated in relatively stable contexts, offering little insight into how Japanese-style education functions in fragile or post-conflict settings. Another important gap identified is the lack of systematic analysis of implementation fidelity and contextual adaptation. While several studies acknowledge that local culture and institutional capacity influence outcomes, few empirically examine how these factors shape effectiveness. Furthermore, international reports on Iraq’s education system emphasize structural challenges and the need for innovation, but do not evaluate specific school-level interventions. The current study addresses these gaps by focusing on the Iraqi context and employing the mixed-methods, quasi-experimental approach, including Difference-in-Differences analysis, thereby extending the literature with empirical evidence from a post-conflict environment.

**Table 5.** JICA/Japanese-Style (Tokkatsu) Schools.

Author (Year)	Country	Study Focus	Key Findings	Research Gap Identified
Madany and Mostafa (2025) <sup>[20]</sup>	Egypt	Tokkatsu school implementation	Improved discipline and teamwork	Lacks causal evaluation
Tsuneyoshi et al. (2019) <sup>[7]</sup> or Motohashi (2025) <sup>[21]</sup>	Egypt	Holistic education outcomes	Positive non-cognitive skills	No control group
Cave (2007) <sup>[8]</sup>	Japan	School culture and routines	Strong discipline culture	Context limited to Japan
Yokota (2023) <sup>[22]</sup>	Egypt	Teacher training effects	Improved classroom management	Limited peer-reviewed evidence
McCafferty (2023) <sup>[23]</sup>	Iraq	Education reconstruction	Identifies system challenges	No school-level intervention analysis

### 3.3. Internal Consistency Reliability (Cronbach’s Alpha)

To assess the internal consistency of the quantitative instruments used in this study, Cronbach’s Alpha coefficients were calculated for each scale. The results indicate satisfactory to high reliability across all instruments. All Cronbach’s Alpha values exceeded the commonly accepted threshold of 0.70, confirming that the instruments were reliable and

suitable for subsequent statistical analysis.

**Table 6** presents the results of the Cronbach’s Alpha tests conducted to assess the internal consistency of the quantitative instruments used in this study. All instruments demonstrated acceptable to high reliability, with Cronbach’s Alpha values exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.70 for social science research. The Student Behavior and Responsibility Questionnaire and the Student Motivation and Engagement Scale showed high reliability, indicating strong internal co-

herence among items measuring student-related outcomes. The Teacher–Student Cooperation Scale also exhibited good reliability, confirming consistent measurement of relational and interactional constructs. Although the School Environment and Cleanliness Checklist recorded a slightly lower alpha

value, it remained within the acceptable range, reflecting stable observer-based assessment of school conditions. These results confirm that the instruments were reliable and suitable for subsequent inferential analyses, thereby strengthening confidence in the study’s quantitative findings and conclusions.

**Table 6.** Internal consistency reliability of quantitative instruments is measured using Cronbach’s Alpha coefficients.

Instrument	Number of Items	Cronbach’s Alpha ( $\alpha$ )	Interpretation
Student Behavior and Responsibility Questionnaire	18	0.88	High reliability
Student Motivation and Engagement Scale	15	0.86	High reliability
Teacher–Student Cooperation Scale	12	0.82	Good reliability
School Environment and Cleanliness Checklist	10	0.79	Acceptable reliability

## 4. Conclusions

The Japanese-style school in Iraq shows how globalization can improve education through cultural exchange and shared best practices. With proper support and adaptation, this model contributes to better learning environments and student character development. In conclusion, the introduction of the Japanese-style school model in Iraq represents a meaningful example of how globalization can positively influence national education systems by promoting knowledge exchange, innovation, and cultural cooperation. Through the adoption of Japanese educational practices such as discipline, teamwork, student responsibility, and interactive learning, Iraqi schools have begun to experience noticeable improvements in student behavior, motivation, school organization, and teacher–student relationships. At the same time, this initiative has strengthened cultural understanding and educational ties between Iraq and Japan, showing how education can serve as a powerful bridge between nations. However, the success of this model depends on addressing several key challenges, including the continuous professional training of teachers, the careful adaptation of Japanese methods to suit Iraqi cultural and social contexts, and the need for sustained funding and policy support to ensure long-term stability. If these challenges are managed effectively, the Japanese-style school experience in Iraq can serve as a strong foundation for broader educational reform, demonstrating that borrowing and adapting global best practices can help rebuild and modernize education systems in developing and post-conflict contexts. Ultimately, this case highlights that globalization in education is not simply about importing foreign systems, but about creating meaningful, culturally sensitive partnerships

that support improved learning environments and contribute to national development.

At the same time, several challenges have emerged in the implementation of JICA-supported schools in Iraq. Differences in teaching traditions, classroom management styles, parental expectations, and examination-oriented schooling have created initial resistance and adjustment difficulties. Limited teacher familiarity with Japanese pedagogical approaches, language barriers in training materials and resource constraints have further complicated implementation. To address these issues, educational stakeholders, including JICA and the Iraqi Ministry of Education, have focused on continuous teacher training, gradual and localized adaptation of practices, and close collaboration with school administrators and communities. These responses highlight the importance of cultural sensitivity, sustained institutional support, and local ownership in ensuring the long-term success of cross-cultural educational reforms.

The implementation of JICA-supported Japanese-style education in Iraq reflects a process of contextual adaptation rather than direct transplantation of the Japanese model. Core elements of JICA’s educational philosophy—such as holistic development, collective responsibility, cooperation, and respect for shared spaces—have been selectively integrated into Iraqi schools in ways that align with local cultural norms, institutional constraints, and post-conflict realities. For example, Tokkatsu activities have been adapted to fit Iraqi school schedules, resource availability, and curriculum requirements, while teacher training has emphasized practical classroom strategies over abstract pedagogical theory. This localized approach has allowed Iraqi schools to benefit from Japanese-style practices without disrupting national

curricular frameworks or cultural expectations.

The advantages of integrating JICA schools into Iraq include measurable improvements in student behavior, responsibility, motivation, and school environment, as well as stronger teacher–student relationships and enhanced school culture. These outcomes suggest that the emphasis on collective routines and student participation resonates with Iraqi social values related to community and mutual responsibility. However, several challenges have also emerged. These include limited teacher familiarity with Japanese pedagogical concepts, the need for continuous professional development, variability in implementation fidelity across schools, and constraints related to funding, resources, and administrative capacity. In some cases, parental expectations focused on examination performance have also created tension with the broader developmental goals of Japanese-style education.

To address these challenges, several recommendations are proposed. First, JICA and national education authorities should prioritize sustained locally embedded teacher training programs that combine mentoring with continuous feedback. Second, implementation guidelines should remain flexible, allowing schools to adapt Tokkatsu practices to their specific contexts while preserving core principles. Third, greater engagement with parents and local communities is essential to build understanding and support for holistic educational goals. Finally, systematic monitoring and evaluation mechanisms should be strengthened to track implementation quality and long-term outcomes. These recommendations are relevant not only for Iraq but also for other countries considering the integration of JICA-supported education models, highlighting the importance of cultural sensitivity, local ownership, and adaptive implementation in cross-national educational reform.

Based on the findings of this study, several practical recommendations can be offered for educational stakeholders considering the implementation of JICA-supported Japanese-style schools in their respective countries. First, policymakers should prioritize gradual and context-sensitive implementation rather than direct replication of the Japanese model. Educational practices such as Tokkatsu should be adapted to local cultural norms, curricular priorities, and institutional capacities. Second, sustained investment in teacher professional development is essential. Teachers should receive continuous training that combines pedagogical theory with

hands-on classroom practice, supported by mentoring and follow-up evaluation. Third, stakeholder engagement should be strengthened through early involvement of school leaders, parents, and local communities to build understanding, acceptance, and shared ownership of the reform. Fourth, adequate resources and institutional support should be ensured to maintain program sustainability, including dedicated funding, monitoring mechanisms, and alignment with national education policies.

In terms of future research directions, further studies should examine the long-term sustainability and longitudinal effects of Japanese-style education on academic achievement, social-emotional development, and post-school outcomes. Comparative studies across different countries and cultural contexts would help identify which components of the Japanese model are most transferable and under what conditions they are most effective. Future research could also explore implementation fidelity, teacher adaptation processes, and student perceptions in greater depth. Finally, the use of experimental or quasi-experimental designs with larger samples and extended time horizons would strengthen causal inference and contribute to a more robust global evidence base on globalization-driven educational reforms.

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Ethical approval is obtained from the relevant educational authorities.

## **Informed Consent Statement**

Informed consent is secured from school leadership, teachers, parents (where required), and students. Participation is voluntary, confidentiality is ensured, and anonymity is maintained.

## **Data Availability Statement**

The data that support the findings of this study are not publicly available to protect participant privacy, but may be obtained from the corresponding author upon reasonable

request and with approval.

## Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflict of interest.

## AI Use Statement

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