

Japanese Language Centers (JLCS) in the Philippines: An Insightful Look at their Profiles and Emerging Opportunities

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Abstract— *This study, Japanese Language Centers (JLCs) in the Philippines: An Insightful Look at Their Profiles and Emerging Opportunities, explores the current state of Japanese Language Centers (JLCs) in the Philippines, particularly in the National Capital Region, focusing on their profiles and business operations. Additionally, the research investigates the marketing, technical, financial, and management opportunities faced by these centers. Through a descriptive-correlational design, data were collected from 30 JLCs in Quezon City and Makati, analyzing variables such as years of operation, number of employees, income, and types of services provided. The results indicate a vibrant landscape of JLCs that balances relatively young and established businesses, primarily catering to entry-level Japanese courses while recognizing significant growth potential through refined marketing strategies and the integration of technology in teaching. Additionally, stable funding sources are deemed essential for financial management and operational success, while effective management practices are viewed as crucial for fostering a positive work culture. Overall, these insights underscore the importance of adaptability and innovation in ensuring the sustainability and growth of JLCs within an evolving educational landscape.*

Keywords— *Emerging opportunities, financial, Japanese Language Centers, marketing, profile, technical management*

I. INTRODUCTION

The increasing interest among Filipinos in learning Japanese, commonly referred to as Nihongo, reflects a broader trend of cultural and economic interconnectivity between the Philippines and Japan. This burgeoning interest is underpinned by both strategic motivations and educational challenges, as evidenced by the significant body of research and discourse on the subject. For instance, Rocamora (2023) highlighted that Filipino university students predominantly pursue Japanese language studies due to the perceived utility in enhancing career prospects and securing employment opportunities. This utilitarian motivation is further reinforced by the increasing number of Filipinos taking Japanese language proficiency tests, such as the JLPT and NAT-TEST, a trend that has seen a remarkable upsurge in participation over the years, indicative of the growing importance placed on Japanese

language proficiency for work and migration opportunities in Japan (Galve, 2022).

Moreover, the encouragement from diplomatic channels, as evidenced by Ambassador Kazuhiko Koshikawa's exhortations, emphasizes Nihongo proficiency's role in providing a competitive edge for Filipino youth in scholarship and job applications in Japan (Rocamora, 2023). This perspective is complemented by the academic findings of Quintos (2022), who identified specific linguistic challenges faced by Filipino learners, such as vocabulary limitations and the lack of cultural context, which hamper the mastery of the Japanese language. These educational hurdles underscore the need for innovative teaching strategies and learning resources that cater to the unique needs of Filipino students.

The strategic partnerships and agreements between the Philippines and Japan, aiming to elevate bilateral relations to new heights, further contextualize the importance of

Nihongo education within the framework of broader socio-economic and defense cooperation (Dominguez, 2023). This multifaceted relationship, bolstered by shared interests and collaborative ventures, underpins the rationale for examining the challenges and opportunities inherent in the Japanese Language Center model in the Philippines.

The synthesis of these insights presents a compelling case for the proposed study, underscoring the relevance of Japanese language education in the Philippines as a linguistic endeavor and a strategic component of the Philippines' broader engagement with Japan. Thus, this research aims to bridge the gap in the literature by delving into the operational dynamics of Japanese Language Centers in the Philippines, focusing on identifying pathways for enhancing the effectiveness and accessibility of Japanese language education and its emerging opportunities.

II. METHODOLOGY

This study utilized the descriptive research design. This quantitative approach was used to systematically examine and quantify the profile and emerging opportunities of

Japanese Language Centers (JLCs) in the Philippines particularly in the National Capital Region (NCR).

Quantitative research approaches emphasize objective measurements, such as analysis of statistics or numerical data collection. The survey included purposively chosen (Suba, 2018), thirty (30) Japanese language centers. Data are acquired from the respondents using several techniques, including surveys and questionnaires (Creswell, 2009). Quantitative studies can also involve interpreting previously collected statistical data using various methodologies. This method is based on obtaining statistical data to extrapolate it across a population of individuals and provide information on a certain occurrence (Barbie, 2010). Data collection was conducted using a structured survey method, which allows for a broad and efficient gathering of data across the targeted geographic area. The collected data was analyzed using appropriate statistical tools.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Demographic Profile of the Japanese Language Centers (JLCs)

Table 1 shows the socio-demographic profiles of the respondent JLCs.

Table 1. Demographic Profile of the Respondents

1. Years of Existence	Frequency	Percent
1 to 2 years	10	33.3
3 to 4 years	11	36.7
5 years and above	9	30.0
Total	30	100.0
2. Number of Employees	Frequency	Percent
1 to 10	17	56.7
11 to 20	13	43.3
Total	30	100.0
3. Annual Gross Income	Frequency	Percent
50,000 to 100,000php	10	33.3
101,000 to 200,000php	6	20.0
201,000php and above	14	46.7
Total	30	100.0
4. Starting Capital	Frequency	Percent
101,000 to 200,000php	15	50.0
201,000php and above	15	50.0
Total	30	100.0
5. Types of Services Provided	Frequency	Percent
N5-N4 Level Japanese Course	24	80.0

Prometric Review	0	.0
Japanese Language Proficiency Test Review	6	20.0
Japanese Language Tutorial	0	.0
Total	30	100.0

Data in Table 1 revealed that most JLCs have existed for 3 to 4 years, representing 36.7% of the total respondents. This indicates that a significant portion of the respondents are relatively young but established businesses. A slightly smaller group (33.3%) are even newer, having been in operation for just 1 to 2 years, showing a trend of emerging businesses. Meanwhile, 30% of the organizations have existed for over 5 years, indicating a balance between new and more experienced businesses.

A majority (56.7%) of businesses operate with a small workforce of 1 to 10 employees, suggesting that these are likely small enterprises, possibly with a limited operational scope or budget. The remaining 43.3% of businesses employ between 11 and 20 people, which may reflect medium-sized operations with slightly larger capacities or service offerings.

The annual gross income varies widely among respondents. The largest proportion (46.7%) reports earning more than 201,000php annually, indicating a considerable income for nearly half of the businesses. On the other hand, 33.3% of businesses earn between 50,000 and 100,000php, and 20% earn between 101,000 and 200,000php. This shows income disparity, with a notable number of businesses generating higher revenue while some operate with a modest income.

There is an equal distribution of starting capital among businesses, with 50% having begun with a capital between 101,000 and 200,000php and the other 50%

starting with more than 201,000php. This suggests that businesses in this sector require substantial initial investments, with no significant difference in capital needed to start operations, regardless of their success or longevity.

A vast majority of businesses (80%) offer N5-N4 level Japanese courses, highlighting a strong focus on entry-level Japanese language education. Only 20% offer Japanese Language Proficiency Test (JLPT) reviews, which are more specialized services. Interestingly, none of the businesses provide Prometric reviews or general Japanese language tutorials, suggesting a niche focus on specific Japanese language certification preparation rather than broad tutorial or technical review services.

In other words, this demographic profile data shows that most businesses in this group are fairly new and small, with only a few employees. Their income varies, with some earning quite a bit and others making less, but they all seem to need a decent amount of money to get started. According to Lawrence's (2015) study, a "combination of priorities is necessary with technology adopted to improve the use of labor and materials" for owners/managers of small businesses. Most of these businesses focus on teaching beginner-level Japanese language courses, and only a few offer other types of services like test reviews or more advanced language support.

2. Emerging Opportunities for the Japanese Language Center (JLC) in terms of the Business Aspects

Table 2.1 Marketing

Marketing	WM	Verbal Description
1. Our marketing strategies create great opportunities for attracting new students.	3.43	Very Good Opportunity
2. Our marketing approach effectively reaches potential students.	3.35	Very Good Opportunity
3. There are many growing opportunities in the demand for learning Japanese.	3.48	Very Good Opportunity
4. Our marketing efforts effectively engage with the right target groups.	3.59	Very Good Opportunity
5. We regularly evaluate our marketing campaigns to identify areas for improvement.	3.65	Very Good Opportunity
6. Exploring new marketing tools and platforms is beneficial for us.	3.60	Very Good Opportunity

7. Recent market research has uncovered new growth opportunities.	3.83	Very Good Opportunity
Overall Weighted Mean	3.56	Very Good Opportunity

Table 2.1 presents the identified opportunities of the JLCs in terms of marketing. The overall weighted mean (WM = 3.56) indicates that these marketing efforts are viewed as a very good opportunity for JLCs because they serve as a conduit for Japanese language centers to show off their unique strengths, academic accomplishments, and additional offerings and their compelled marketing strategy attracts potential pupils and their parents, establishing a positive first impression and fostering a long-term connection with the school.

Item 7, “Recent market research has uncovered new growth opportunities.” got the highest weighted mean of 3.83 and was interpreted as “Very Good Opportunity.” In contrast, item 2, “Our marketing approach effectively reaches potential students.” got the lowest weighted mean of 3.35, also interpreted as “Very Good Opportunity.”

The findings suggest that the JLC has identified promising growth opportunities through recent market research, which can be leveraged for strategic expansion. However, the effectiveness of the marketing approach

highlights the need for a more targeted strategy to capitalize on these new opportunities and effectively engage potential students (Yan & Liu, 2020).

Another significant opportunity for JLCs is the effectiveness in reaching their potential students (WM = 3.35), which can be attributed to their marketing efforts to effectively engage with the right target groups (IWM = 3.59). According to a study by Tyagita (2016), educational institutions' marketing strategies must separate themselves from their rivals by delivering higher-quality services, superior commodities, and superior teacher performance, among other things.

Finally, JLCs is open to using new marketing methods and platforms. As a result, they must consider embracing the newest trends in digital marketing, as it has become a crucial tool for educational institutions seeking to interact with learners, parents, and stakeholders. To remain competitive and efficiently reach their target audience, educational institutions must keep up with the most recent digital marketing trends (Ganesan & Gopalsamy, 2022).

Table 2.2 Technical

Technical	WM	Verbal Description
1. Our technical resources provide excellent opportunities for enhancing operations.	3.68	Very Good Opportunity
2. We do not face major technical challenges that hinder our progress.	3.57	Very Good Opportunity
3. We are well-trained to use our technical systems, improving our operational efficiency.	3.64	Very Good Opportunity
4. Advances in technology greatly benefit our teaching methods.	3.72	Very Good Opportunity
5. Our technical support for students and staff is robust and helpful.	3.59	Very Good Opportunity
6. Plans to upgrade our technical infrastructure offer promising opportunities.	3.53	Very Good Opportunity
7. Embracing new technologies enhances our technical capabilities.	3.73	Very Good Opportunity
Overall Weighted Mean	3.64	Very Good Opportunity

Table 2.2 shows the identified opportunities of the JLCs regarding the technical aspect. The overall weighted mean (WM = 3.64) indicates that these technical efforts are

viewed as a very good opportunity for JLCs, as incorporating technology into education has proven to be a transformative force, transforming traditional classrooms

into dynamic centers of learning and innovation. As JLCs traverse the twenty-first century, it has become clear that technology is more than simply a supplemental tool; it is a crucial enabler with the ability to transform education and raise student accomplishment by implementing proven teaching methodologies.

Item 7, “Embracing new technologies enhances our technical capabilities.” got the highest weighted mean of 3.73 and was interpreted as “Very Good Opportunity.” At the same time, item 6, “Plans to upgrade our technical infrastructure offer promising opportunities.” got the lowest weighted mean of 3.53, also interpreted as “Very Good Opportunity.”

Results showed that JLCs integrate technology in their operations to enhance their services, greatly benefiting

their teaching methods. This implies that JLCs embraced the importance of using technology in their teaching-learning process.

According to the most recent research into how modern students prefer to use technology and how it affects their learning, it has been discovered that using modern equipment, technology, and tools increases students' learning and interactivity (Raja and Nagasubramani, 2018). They also find that when technology is used, it makes it much more dynamic and entertaining. Technology has four roles in education: it is incorporated into the curriculum, it serves as an educational delivery method, it aids instruction, and it serves as a tool to improve the overall learning process.

Table 2.3 Financial

Financial	WM	Verbal Description
1. Our stable funding sources provide a solid foundation for growth opportunities.	3.70	Very Good Opportunity
2. Financial stability creates a positive environment for expanding our programs.	3.68	Very Good Opportunity
3. Effective budgeting and financial planning enhance our operational opportunities.	3.55	Very Good Opportunity
4. Financial considerations are well-integrated into our strategic decisions.	3.68	Very Good Opportunity
5. Our cost and revenue management practices support continued growth.	3.58	Very Good Opportunity
6. We manage financial risks effectively, ensuring stability.	3.59	Very Good Opportunity
7. Positive financial trends support our strategic development and expansion.	3.61	Very Good Opportunity
Overall Weighted Mean	3.63	Very Good Opportunity

Table 2.3 displays the identified opportunities of the JLCs in terms of the financial aspect. The overall weighted mean (WM = 3.63) suggests that these financial efforts are considered a very good opportunity for JLCs' strategic management of their finances. Financial decision-making is an important part of corporate management. It entails deciding amongst various options to attain financial objectives. Every action, from budgeting to investing, influences financial stability and development. Financial decision-making includes analyzing possibilities, making decisions, and acting on financial matters. It entails evaluating risks, utilizing existing resources, and integrating decisions with long-term goals. Effective decision-making is vital for financial success, either

managing personal money or directing a firm toward success (Martinez, 2024).

Item 1, “Our stable funding sources provide a solid foundation for growth opportunities.” got the highest weighted mean of 3.70 and was interpreted as “Very Good Opportunity,” while item 3, “Effective budgeting and financial planning enhance our operational opportunities.” got the lowest weighted mean of 3.55 also interpreted as “Very Good Opportunity.”

Results showed that JLCs’ stable funding sources provide a solid foundation for growth opportunities, which gives them effective budgeting and financial planning to enhance their operational opportunities. It only implies that the sources of funding affect their program’s stability.

Financial assets are the most powerful instruments for improving both a school's human and physical resources. Aside from curriculum changes and capacity development initiatives, the Department of Education (DepEd) keeps providing additional cash to public schools to assist them in fulfilling their ultimate mission of educating students to grow into better citizens of this nation (DepEd Order No. 13, s. 2016).

Private schools, on the other hand, require working capital to cover routine operating expenses such as instructor and administrator salaries and benefits, academic

and sports programs, utilities, repairs and maintenance, printing, copying, and office supplies, IT supplies, services and software, student transportation, and so on. Tuition, supplemental fees and income, and investment income are often used sources of operating capital. When private schools require a big new building, repairs to an existing facility, or other major expenditures on capital, some, but not all, can fund such costs through cash reserves, endowment funds, or contemporaneous contributions. More commonly, instead of postponing the project, institutions turn to loan funding (Gabay, 2022).

Table 2.4 Management

Management	WM	Verbal Description
1. Our management structure provides clear opportunities for efficient operations.	3.56	Very Good Opportunity
2. Effective management practices contribute to smooth operations and growth.	3.45	Very Good Opportunity
3. Our leadership is supportive and promotes a productive work environment.	3.73	Very Good Opportunity
4. Innovative management practices enhance our organizational effectiveness.	3.58	Very Good Opportunity
5. Regular staff training and development programs are beneficial for us.	3.55	Very Good Opportunity
6. Our conflict resolution policies improve workplace harmony.	3.45	Very Good Opportunity
7. Continuous assessment and improvement of our operations support our organizational success.	3.59	Very Good Opportunity
Overall Weighted Mean	3.56	Very Good Opportunity

Table 2.4 displays the identified opportunities of the JLCs in terms of management. The overall weighted mean (WM = 3.56) suggests that these management efforts are considered a good opportunity for JLC management toward a positive work culture.

Item 3, "Our leadership is supportive and promotes a productive work environment." got the highest weighted mean of 3.73 and was interpreted as "Very Good Opportunity." In contrast, items 2, "Effective management practices contribute to smooth operations and growth." and 6, "Our conflict resolution policies improve workplace harmony." got the lowest weighted mean of 3.45, also interpreted as "Very Good Opportunity."

The findings revealed that JLCs' leadership supports a healthy school culture that encourages student and staff growth. Finally, effective leadership is critical in creating a pleasant work atmosphere. Leaders may foster a healthy workplace by using strategies that stress active

listening, offering context, guaranteeing justice, supporting psychological safety, utilizing strengths, exhibiting empathy, and recognizing contributions while encouraging excitement. Such an atmosphere improves the team's well-being and promotes long-term productivity and success. Leaders who perceive themselves as gardeners and nurture their workers with care and attention will witness their organizations grow and improve (Govil, 2020).

Moreover, JLCs' management structure provides clear opportunities for efficient operations, which guides in the effective management practices that contribute to smooth operations and growth of JLCs such as using innovative management practices that enhance their organizational effectiveness.

The findings indicated that maintaining a healthy workplace culture has become a major concern for JLCs in today's fast-paced and competitive work environment. This increases staff engagement, efficiency, and well-being. As

a result, JLCs promote cooperation, innovation, and creativity while making employees feel appreciated, respected, and supported.

Alkeaid (2023) stated good leadership is essential for building a positive and productive workplace atmosphere. As a result, leaders play an important role in defining an organization's culture, and their behaviors and mindsets substantially influence their teams' well-being. As a result, their abilities as managers and leaders provide a chance to encourage and enable school-wide teaching competence to accomplish a high rate of advancement for all students.

IV. CONCLUSION

The following conclusions are made based on the findings of this study:

1. A vibrant landscape of Japanese language centers, with a mix of relatively young and more established businesses, primarily operating with small to medium-sized workforces. While there is a notable income disparity among these enterprises, the majority focus on entry-level Japanese courses, reflecting a niche specialization in language education rather than a broader range of services.
2. The Japanese language centers have recognized substantial growth opportunities through recent market research, emphasizing the importance of refining their marketing strategies to effectively engage potential students and remain competitive in a rapidly evolving digital landscape.
3. The Japanese language centers recognize the transformative potential of technology in education, viewing it as a vital opportunity to enhance their teaching methods and improve student outcomes.
4. The Japanese language centers view stable funding sources as a crucial foundation for growth, underscoring the importance of effective financial decision-making and planning in enhancing their operational opportunities.
5. The Japanese language centers perceive their management practices as a valuable opportunity to foster a positive work culture, highlighting the significance of supportive leadership and effective management in promoting productivity and harmony within the workplace.

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