Internationalization and International Students in Japan

Experts' Knowledge Exchange Seminar

CHEER, University of Sussex
June 28

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No immigration policy so far...

• In Japan, the population will decline about 10M. over the next 10 to 15 years, and 30% of the population will be 60 years of age or older.

• In 2018, the number of foreign workers reached almost 1.5M. It’s becoming easier to obtain a permanent residency.

• A large number of low-skilled foreign workers under the training visa and student visa. Many language schools abuse a work permit for int’l students -> low-skilled jobs and 3-D (dangerous, demanding, and dirty) jobs.

• In 2018, 298,980 international students including Japanese language school students.

• Officially, Japan has no immigration policy. However, back and side doors are open...
Japan's Wariness About Immigration

Foreign nationals form smaller part of population than in other developed nations

Source: OECD (percentage of people with nationality of another country in 2013)

Source: Bloomberg (2014) Why Immigrant-Shy Japan Is Luring Foreign Workers: QuickTake Q&A
Japan Opens up to Foreign Workers
Number of foreign nationals working in Japan and foreign workers by industry

Number of foreign workers (in thousands)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Foreign Workers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>'08</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'10</td>
<td>450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'12</td>
<td>550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'14</td>
<td>650</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'16</td>
<td>750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'18</td>
<td>1,460</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Where foreigners work (2018)

- Manufacturing: 29.7%
- Other Services: 15.8%
- Wholesale and retail: 12.7%
- Hospitality: 12.7%
- Education: 4.8%
- Construction: 4.7%
- Information and communications: 3.9%
- Health care: 1.8%

Source: MHLW Japan

Source: Statista (2019) Number of Foreign Workers in Japan Nearly Doubles in Four Years
Foreign workers by type of visa (total: 1.28 million)

- Trainee (0.24 million) - 20%
- Work Visa (0.24 million) - 20%
- Residents (0.36 million) - 20%
- Others (0.26 million) - 20%
- Students (0.26 million) - 20%

Population Trends in Japan

Age Pyramid of Population

1980

Source: Census (1965-2015) and "Population Projection for Japan: 2016-2065" (Medium-fertility (medium-mortality) projection)
Age Pyramid of Population

Source: Census (1965-2015) and "Population Projection for Japan: 2016-2065" (Medium-fertility (medium-mortality) projection)
Overview of Japanese Higher Education
## Size of Japanese Higher Ed. (# of institutions)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>National</th>
<th>Local Public</th>
<th>Private</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>% of Private Schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Universities</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>603</td>
<td>782</td>
<td>77.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior Colleges</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>314</td>
<td>331</td>
<td>94.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colleges of Technology</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>920</td>
<td>1,170</td>
<td>78.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: MEXT Basic Statistics of Schools (2018)
“An Age When All Are Accepted to College”

• Deteriorating national demographic climate and the overcapacity of H.Ed.: the # of univs. 523 in 1992 to 782 in 2018 (large private sector)

• College (first degree program) participation rate: 57.9%

• College (first degree program) acceptance rate: 87.9%

• Post-secondary ed. participation rate (inc. non-university HEIs.): 81.5%

• In 2018, private univs. did not meet their authorized enrollment quotas: 36.1%, two-year colleges: 70.4%

• Newly admitted students through a system of admissions bases upon recommendations by high schools: 44.3% (private: 51.2%)

Promotion and Mutual Aid Cooperation for Private Schools of Japan (2018)
“An Age When All Are Accepted to College”

• Enrollment problems (low domestic enrollment)
  – Private: Undergraduate, esp. single-department colleges in the provinces
  – National: Postgraduate, esp. humanities and social sciences due to the expansion of graduate schools’ capacity: 90,000 in 1991 ⇒ 260,000 in 2009

• Becoming difficult to recruit enough qualified students into STEM field programs

• Prevailing “skilled migration approach” and “revenue-generating approach” as the rationales of Japan’s int’l student policies and practices
Figure 1  Japan’s Population of 18-Year-Olds, 1980–2031


Figure 2: Japan’s Rate of Enrollment in Higher Education, 1955–2014


Figure 3 The Number of Universities in Japan, 1955–2014


International Students in Japan: Policy and Practice
Number of Int’l Students in Japanese Higher Ed.

Source: Japan Student Services Organization (2019)
Policy Change

• 100,000 International Students Plan (1983 – 2004)
  ➢ Aid approach: Scholarships and financial assistance/aids for int’l students and their host institutions
  ➢ Int’l students supposed to return home countries upon graduation

• 300,000 International Students Plan (2008 - 2020)
  ➢ Skilled-migration approach: Promotion of post-graduation employment in Japan responding to its demographic changes
  ➢ Revenue-generating approach: responding to enrollment problems

• Japan Revitalization Strategy 2014
  ➢ “Attract highly skilled international students to boost the country’s competitiveness and to revitalize the economy”

• New Trend: Local governments and business associations promote the recruitment and employment of int’l students in collaboration with HEIs.
### Int’l Students incl. Language Study Students in Japan

#### Top 10 number of International Students by Nationality (as of each May 1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country/region</th>
<th>Number of students 2018</th>
<th>Number of students 2017</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>% of total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>114,950</td>
<td>107,260</td>
<td>7,690</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>72,354</td>
<td>61,671</td>
<td>10,683</td>
<td>17.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nepal</td>
<td>24,331</td>
<td>21,500</td>
<td>2,831</td>
<td>13.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republic of Korea</td>
<td>17,012</td>
<td>15,740</td>
<td>1,272</td>
<td>8.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taiwan</td>
<td>9,524</td>
<td>8,947</td>
<td>577</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sri Lanka</td>
<td>8,329</td>
<td>6,607</td>
<td>1,722</td>
<td>26.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>6,277</td>
<td>5,495</td>
<td>782</td>
<td>14.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Myanmar</td>
<td>5,928</td>
<td>4,816</td>
<td>1,112</td>
<td>23.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>3,962</td>
<td>3,985</td>
<td>-23</td>
<td>-0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>3,640</td>
<td>2,748</td>
<td>892</td>
<td>32.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>32,673</td>
<td>28,273</td>
<td>4,400</td>
<td>15.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>298,880</strong></td>
<td><strong>267,042</strong></td>
<td><strong>31,938</strong></td>
<td><strong>12.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Japan Student Services Organization (2019)
## Int’l Students Enrolled in HEIs and Language Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country/region</th>
<th>Number of students</th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>86,439</td>
<td>79,502</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>42,083</td>
<td>35,489</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nepal</td>
<td>15,329</td>
<td>14,850</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republic of Korea</td>
<td>14,557</td>
<td>13,538</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taiwan</td>
<td>7,423</td>
<td>6,994</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>4,719</td>
<td>4,235</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sri Lanka</td>
<td>4,429</td>
<td>3,020</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Myanmar</td>
<td>3,385</td>
<td>2,686</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>3,241</td>
<td>3,266</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>2,897</td>
<td>2,750</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>24,399</td>
<td>22,054</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>208,901</strong></td>
<td><strong>188,384</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country/region</th>
<th>Number of students</th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>30,271</td>
<td>26,182</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>28,511</td>
<td>27,758</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nepal</td>
<td>9,002</td>
<td>6,650</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sri Lanka</td>
<td>3,900</td>
<td>3,587</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Myanmar</td>
<td>2,543</td>
<td>2,130</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republic of Korea</td>
<td>2,455</td>
<td>2,202</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taiwan</td>
<td>2,101</td>
<td>1,953</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>1,558</td>
<td>1,260</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uzbekistan</td>
<td>1,427</td>
<td>606</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>1,205</td>
<td>892</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>7,106</td>
<td>5,438</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>90,079</strong></td>
<td><strong>78,658</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Japan Student Services Organization (2019)
Int’l Students Enrolled in Language Schools

Source: Japan Student Services Organization (2010-19)

[Bar chart showing the number of international students enrolled in language schools from 2010 to 2018, categorized by country: China, Korea, Taiwan, Vietnam, Nepal, and Others.]

[Table data not shown in the image]
Changes in International Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level or type of program</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>% of total</th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>% of total</th>
<th>% Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Postgraduates</td>
<td>39,749</td>
<td>67.8</td>
<td>50,184</td>
<td>46.2</td>
<td>+26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UG including AD programs</td>
<td>71,244</td>
<td></td>
<td>87,806</td>
<td></td>
<td>+23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vocational and training schools</strong></td>
<td>25,463</td>
<td>31.2</td>
<td>67,475</td>
<td>52.7</td>
<td>+165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Japanese language schools</strong></td>
<td>25,622</td>
<td></td>
<td>90,079</td>
<td></td>
<td>+252</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparatory courses</td>
<td>1,619</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>3,436</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>+112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>163,697</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>298,980</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>+83</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Plus, increasing number of non-degree seeking int’l students enrolled in preparatory courses at universities.

Source: Japan Student Services Organization (2019)
Changes in International Students

Source: nippon.com (2019)
Advancement Rate from language Schools to Universities

- Chinese: 63.4% (advanced to grad schools: 23.6%)
- Vietnamese: 19.0% (advanced to grad schools: 0.5%)
- Nepalese: 12.8% (advanced to grad school: 0.6%)

Source: Association for the Promotion of Japanese Language Education (2019)

- Overall, Vietnamese and Nepalese students have made up for the decreases in Chinese and Korean students.
- Due to the lack of Japanese proficiency and financial ability, it’s difficult for Vietnamese and Nepalese students to be accepted by universities, compared with Chinese, Taiwanese, and Korean students.
Employment of International Students Upon Graduation in Japan
Current Trends

• Increasing the need for a “globally minded workforce”
  – International students studying in Japan
  – Japanese students with study abroad experience

• Hiring international students from Asian countries as “bridging HR/personnel”, e.g. Bridging IT system engineers

• Rationales
  – Revitalize Japanese economy (economy-driven policy)
  – Globalizing economy and emerging markets in Asia
  – Support the business expansion and growth outside Japan, esp. in Asia: Companies need a globally minded workforce and bridging HR/personnel
  – Shift from the manufacturing industry to the consumer and service-based one ⇒ communication skills are important
International students would be hired as a symbol of company’s “diversity” (internationalization).
“Vitality” is defined as ones strength to overcome hardships and obstacles whereas “enthusiasm” makes people want to enter the company.

Source: Ministry of Economy, Trade, and Industry (2012)
Employment of Int’l Students: Positive Data

• Successfully changed visa status from student to work: 7,831 (2010) -> 22,419 (2017)
  Source: Immigration Bureau (2018)

• 34.1% of major companies hired int’l graduates (2018)
• 53.1 % of major companies have a plan to hire int’l students in 2019
  Source: DISCO Inc. (2018)

• 46.8 % of SME were positive in hiring int’l students (2019)
  Source: DISCO Inc. (2018)
Employment of Int’l Students: Gaps

• 63.5% of int’l students want to work in Japan (2017)
• 31.1% of int’l graduates got a job in Japan (2017)
  Source: Japan Student Services Organization (2019)

• 59.6% of int’l students want to get employed by leading and large-scale companies (more than 1,000 workers)(2018)
• 17.0% of int’l students want to employed by SME (2018)
  Source: DISCO Inc. (2018)

• 36.9% of int’l graduates got employed by SME (less than 50 workers)
  Source: Japan Student Services Organization and Immigration Bureau (2018)

• STEM students are in high demand, but 23.2% of int’l students majoring in STEM field (2018)
  Source: Japan Student Services Organization (2019)
Difficulties Int’l Students Face While Looking for a Job

• Employers tend to require native-equivalent level Japanese language ability.

• Peculiar recruitment and employment system: time-consuming recruiting and job-hunting process
  ➢ Job-hunting period: from March to October (once a year)
  ➢ Detailed resume and application (entry sheet): be filled out in polished Japanese
  ➢ Aptitude test: examine academic skills and personality
  ➢ Several rounds of interviews (by junior level officials to by CEO)
  ➢ Too many manners and etiquette including “recruitment suits”

• Membership-based employment (NOT job-based employment)
Favorable Job Hunting Styles

**Hair style**
Long hair is not preferable. Be careful not to have any spiky mohawks or unruly hair, or any dandruff.

**Face**
Be clean shaven. Extremely thin eyebrows are not preferable. Pay attention to your teeth and grooming.

**Glasses**
Avoid colorful and loud frames. Watch out for dirty lenses.

**Cologne**
It is better not to wear any cologne.

**Nails**
Be sure to trim your nails short and wash them to remove any dirt.

**Shirt**
Worn is the basic color. Be sure to choose a shirt that fits you around the color and size. Pay attention when wearing a colored or patterned T-shirt or dark undershirt, because they can be seen through a white shirt. Wash out for a color shirt and buttons. You should wear a clean, washed shirt.

**Accessories**
Do not wear any accessories.

**Tie**
Avoid flashy ties.

**Suit**
Dark blue, gray, or black are the basic colors. Choose a solid or finely striped tie. Ordinarily, wear your tie with a single knot, not a double knot.

**Trousers**
Trousers with a standard width and single-fold hem are preferable. Be sure to iron them to minimize creases. Your belt and shoes should match.

**Shoes**
You should choose simple and comfortable black shoes. Be sure to check for scuffing on the heels, and polish your shoes properly.

**Socks**
White socks and knee-high socks are taboo. Choose socks that are the same color as your suit, or that are black or dark blue.

**Watch**
You should avoid wearing a flashy watch. You must not use your mobile phone to check the time during the interview or test.

**Briefcase**
A black or brown briefcase is mainstream. A briefcase big enough for A4 size documents is convenient. Be sure to avoid backpacks and casual bags.

**Hair style**
Caper cap long hair behind your ears or gather it together at the back so that the ears are visible. Be careful not to have any spiky mohawks here.

**Face**
Heavy makeup is not preferred. Pay attention to your teeth and breath as well.

**Glasses**
Avoid colorful and loud frames. Watch out for dirty lenses.

**Perfume**
Avoid wearing strong perfumes.

**Nails**
Nails should not be too long, it is not good to wear flashy nail polish or nail art.

**Blouse**
White is the basic color. A shirt in a solid, pale color is also acceptable. Avoid wearing a shirt in a primary color or with patterns. Be sure not to wear a shirt that is too loose. Choose something pleasant and clean.

**Accessories**
Simple, plain-colored earrings should be fine. You should remove all your rings.

**Suit**
Solid dark blue, gray, or black suits are the best. As a rule, what is single but with one or two buttons, not a double suit.

**Skirt/Trousers**
Your skirt must be of a length that allows your knees to be half-covered when you are standing. Wearing trousers will give an active image. Trousers with single-fold hems are mainstream. Be sure to iron them to make creases.

**Shoes**
You should choose simple and comfortable black shoes. Be sure to polish your shoes properly. Pumps with heels that are from three to five centimeters high are best.

**Pantyhoses**
Choose something plain with no patterns, and a color similar to your skin tone.

Source: Japan Student Services Organization (2019) *Job Hunting Guide for International Students*
“Companies do not intend to hire students who stand out with their appearance and unique character. They are checking to see if you are well-groomed and dressed based on social common sense. There is no need to dress yourself up with expensive items.”
Newly-hired employees of Japan Airlines pose for photos during an initiation ceremony at a hangar of Haneda airport in Tokyo on April 3. | REUTERS
Difficulties Int’l Students Face While Working at a Japanese Company

- **Japanese business culture**
  - Long-term (life-time) employment and seniority-based wage system
  - Vague assessment system and slow promotion
  - Complicated communication style, e.g. high context culture
  - Strict work ethics
  - Long working hours
  - Unequal treatment of foreign workers
  - Hierarchical structure
  - After-work socialization

- **Japanese culture**: High power distance, Collectivism, Masculine, High uncertainty avoidance, Long-term orientation according to Hofstede’s Cultural Dimensions
Non-Japanese Academics in HEIs

• Percentage of foreign faculty members at universities: 4.6% (2017), China: 45%, Korea: 22%, USA: 17%

• Foreign language instructors ⇒ Contents-based academics: STEM, EMI courses and programs, and ETPs (degree programs)

• Non-tenured, contract-based (often non-renewable), adjuncts: “helpers” and “utility (convenient) persons” ⇒ Tenured (full-fledged faculty members), shifting from a baseball mode to a soccer/rugby model??

• Emerging academic administrators, e.g., VPs, deans, chairs, directors, senior officials, particularly Senior International Officers, with a good command of the Japanese language.
Challenges and Opportunities

• To diversify companies’ workforce, they hire int’l graduates. However, in reality, they hire int’l graduates just like Japanese, looking for more Japanese than Japanese.

• A mind change is needed: To internationalize companies, they hire int’l graduates -> Internationalized companies can attract high-quality int’l graduates more.

• Japanese students/employees with study abroad experience could be a key to solve those problems.

• Gaps between (1) concept/vision and reality, (2) government and education institutions & industry, (3) policy (high-skilled workers) and practice (low-skilled workers), and (4) executives (leadership) and HR department & frontline offices.
Challenges and Opportunities

• “Unethical Happy Triangle”: (1) Troubled private HEIs and unethical Japanese language schools, (2) Int’l students who want to work rather than study, (3) Companies facing a labor shortage problem

• Lack of long-term, grand design for immigration
  – Patchwork response and add-on approach (procrastination and shutting eyes to reality)
  – Immigration: Is it possible for Japan to shift from unauthorized backdoor open policy to front-door open policy (multi-cultural society)?

• Revisit and redefine the country of Japan (a small island country but huge mindset).
Thank you for your attention.

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http://international.hit-u.ac.jp/jp/courses/hgp/index.html