

Internationalization and International Students in Japan

Experts' Knowledge Exchange Seminar

**CHEER, University of Sussex
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Hiroshi Ota, Ph.D.

Professor, Center for General
Education

Hitotsubashi University

E-mail: h.ota@r.hit-u.ac.jp



HITOTSUBASHI UNIVERSITY

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



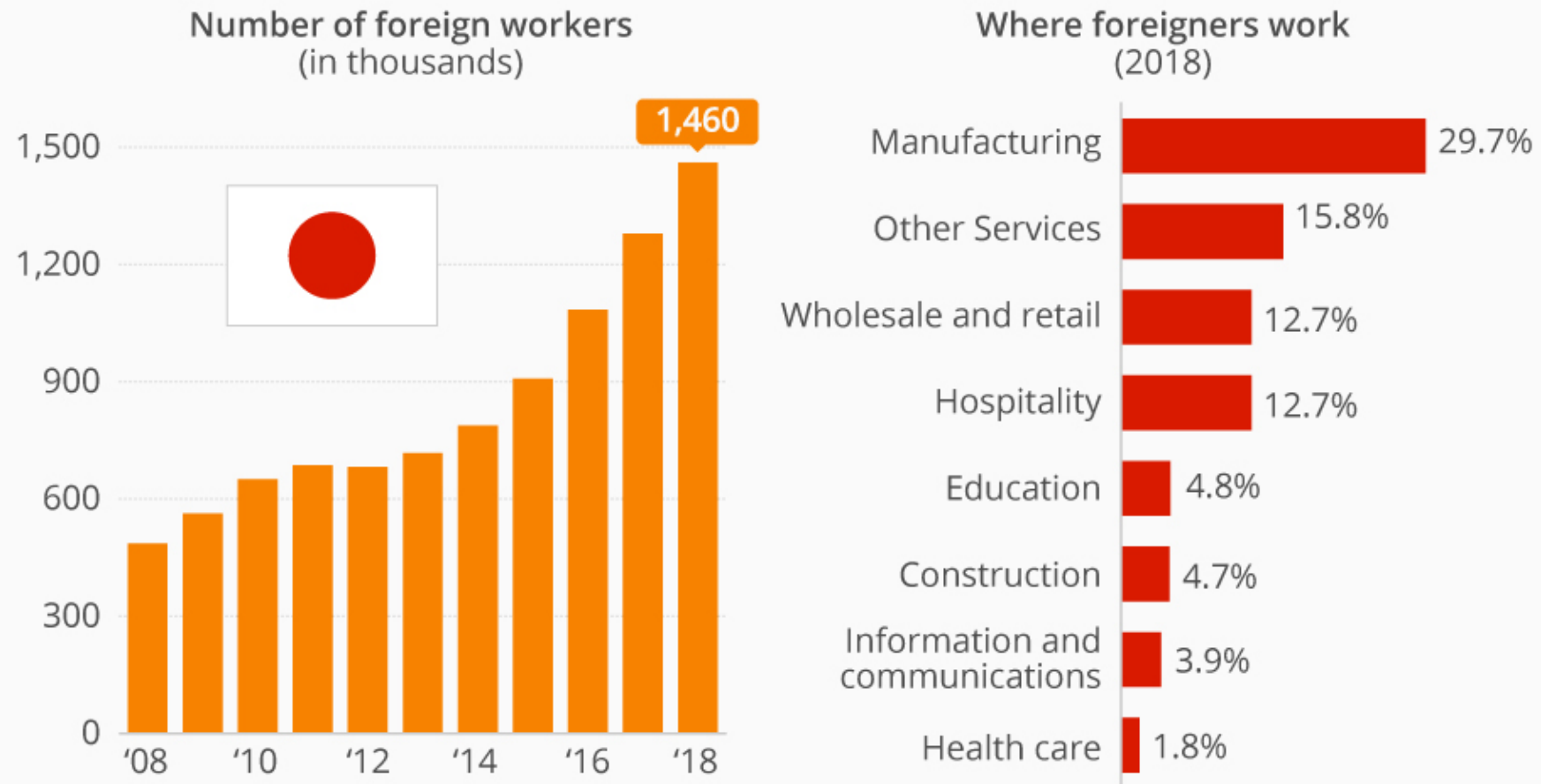
Source: OECD (percentage of people with nationality of another country in 2013)

Bloomberg 

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

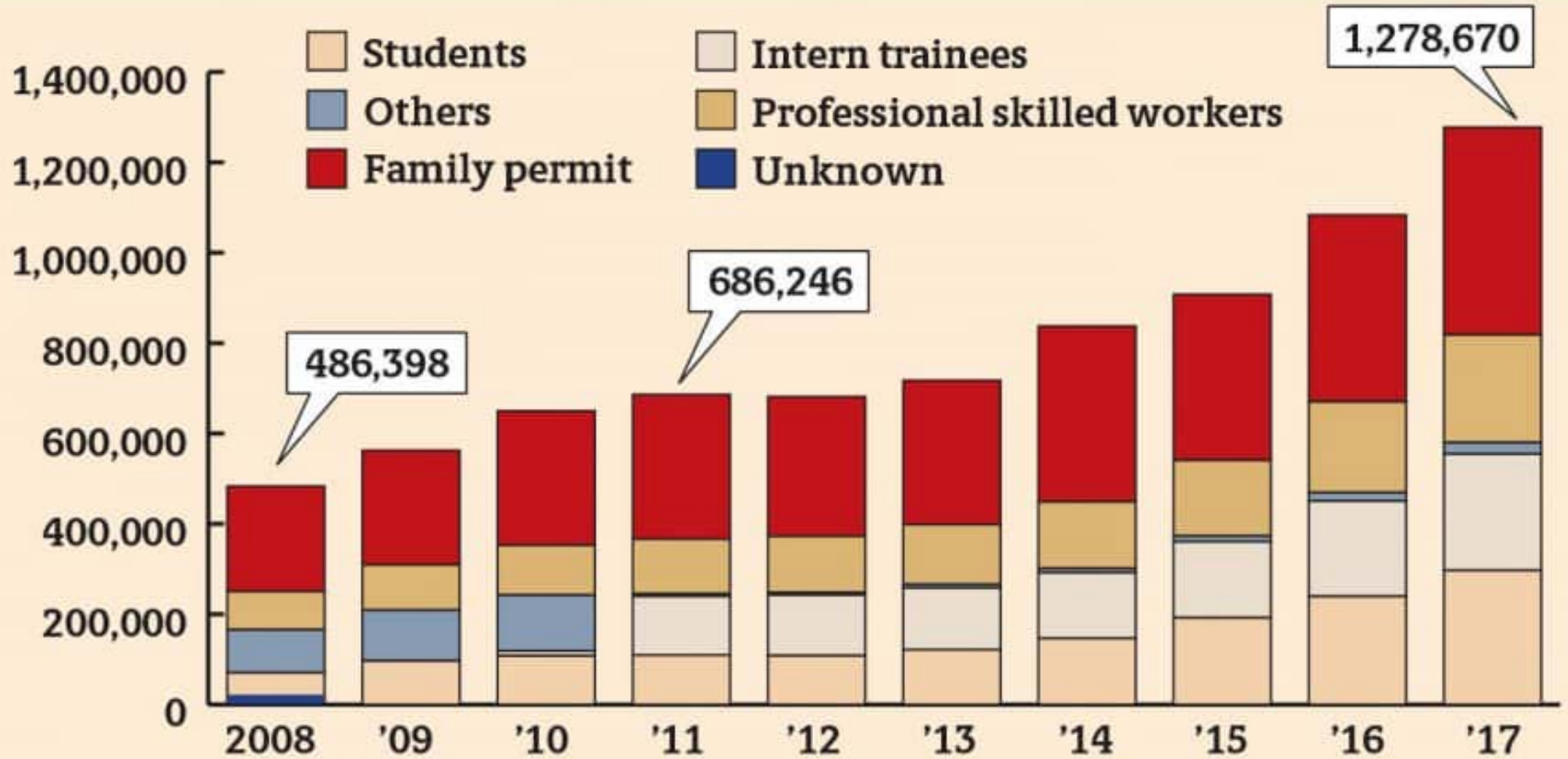


@StatistaCharts Source: MHLW Japan



Source: Statista (2019) *Number of Foreign Workers in Japan Nearly Doubles in Four Years*

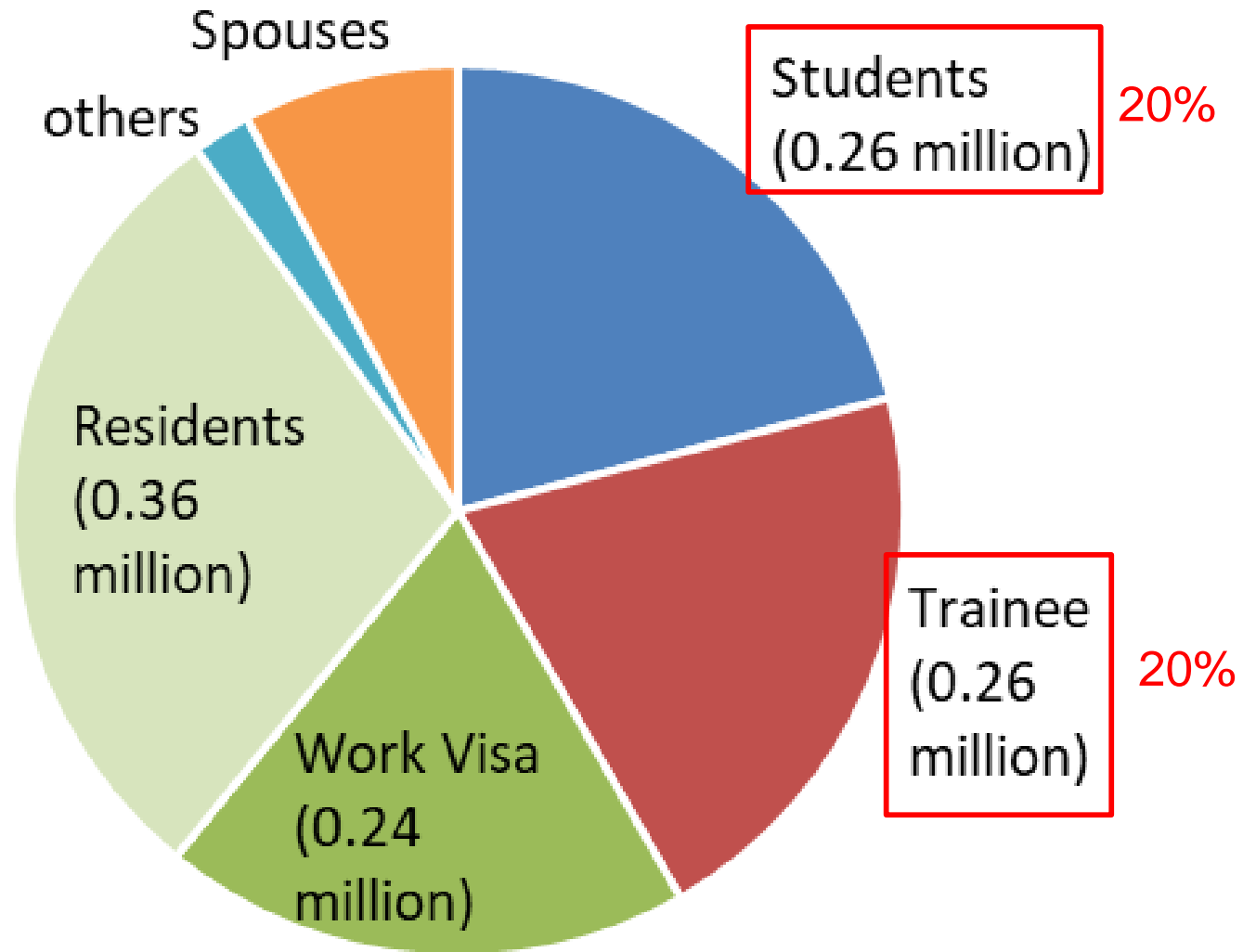
Foreign workers in Japan by visa status



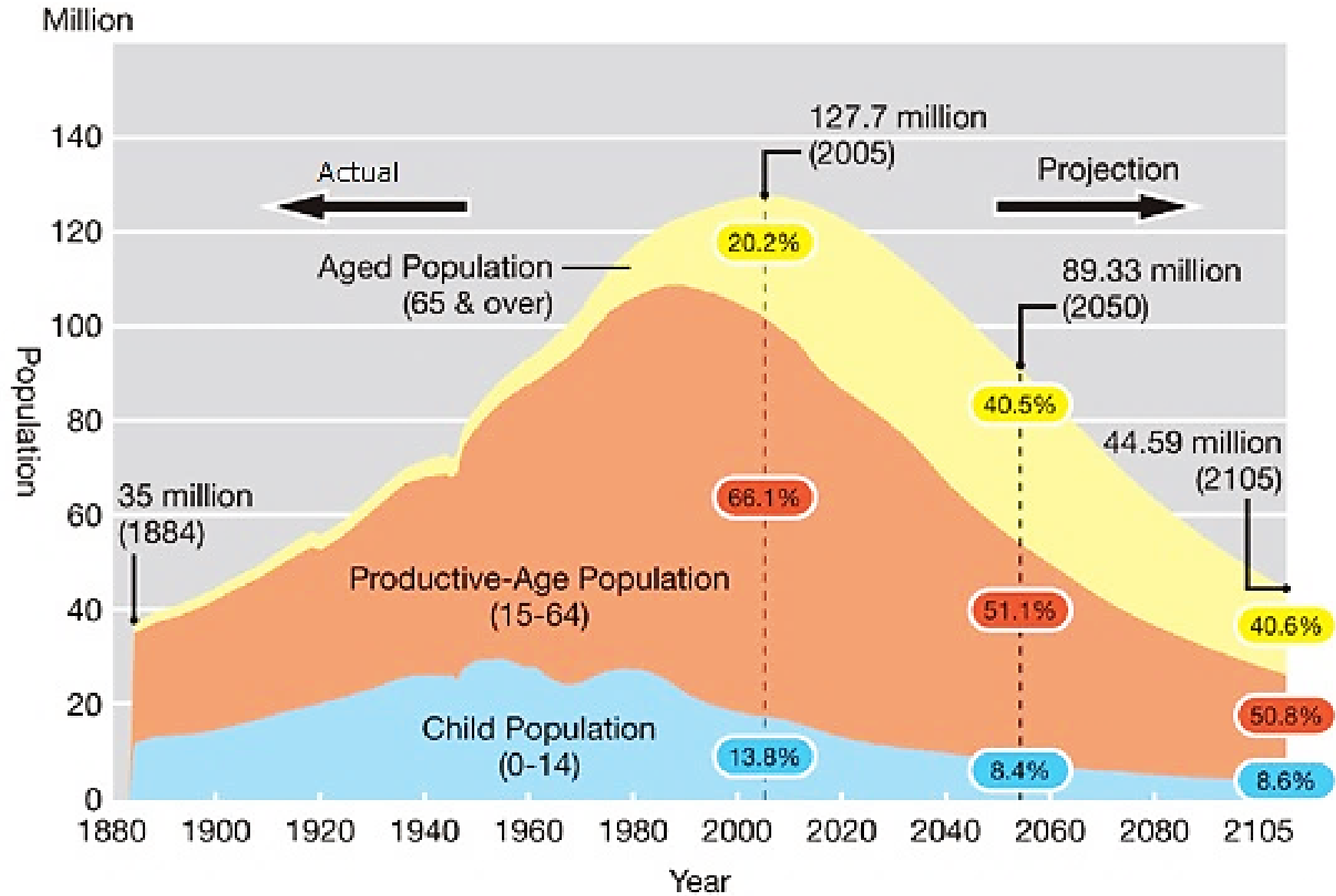
SOURCE: Labor ministry

JAPAN TIMES GRAPHIC

Foreign workers by type of visa (total:1.28 million)



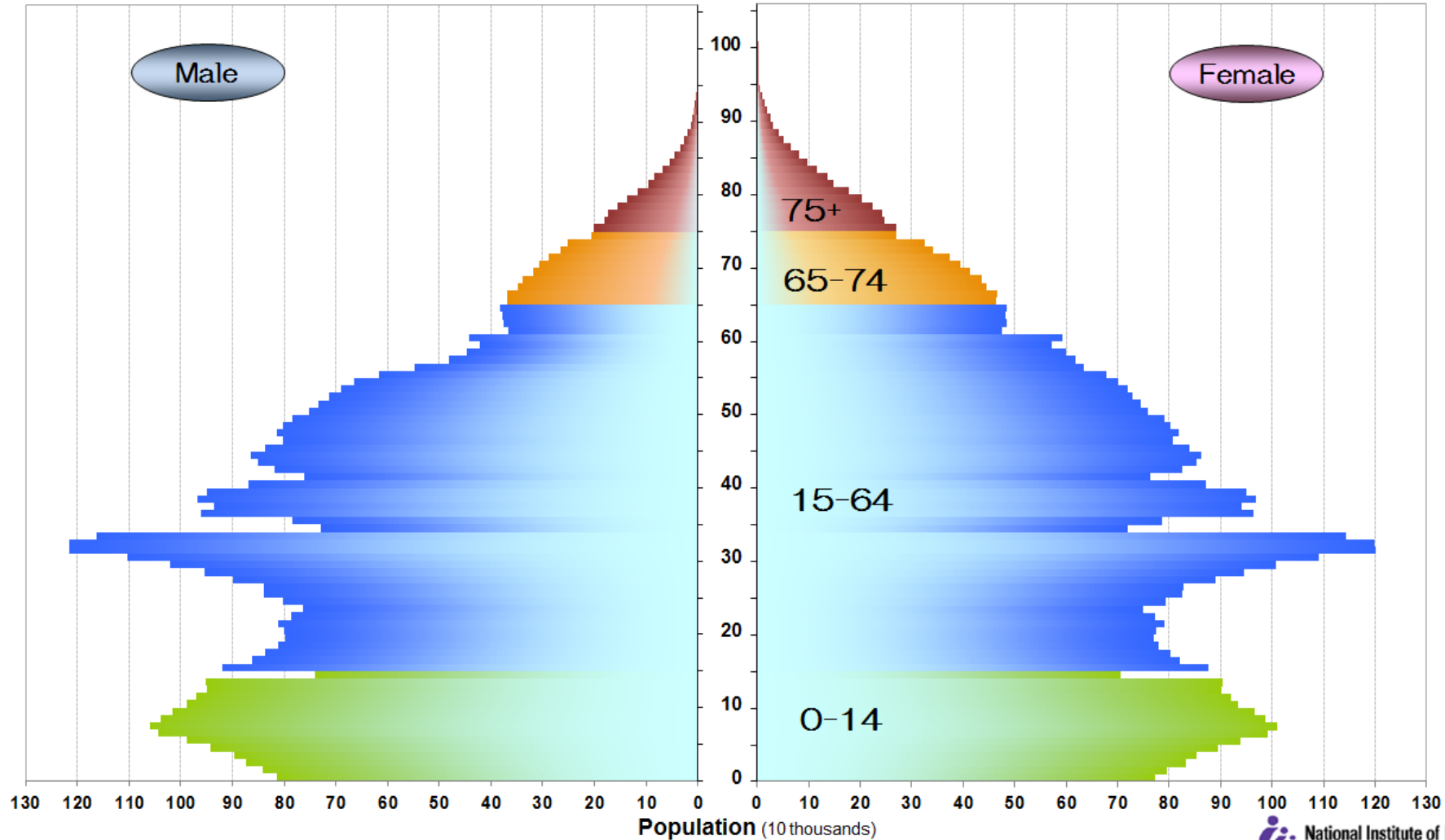
Population Trends in Japan



Source: National Institute of Population and Social Security (2013)

Age Pyramid of Population

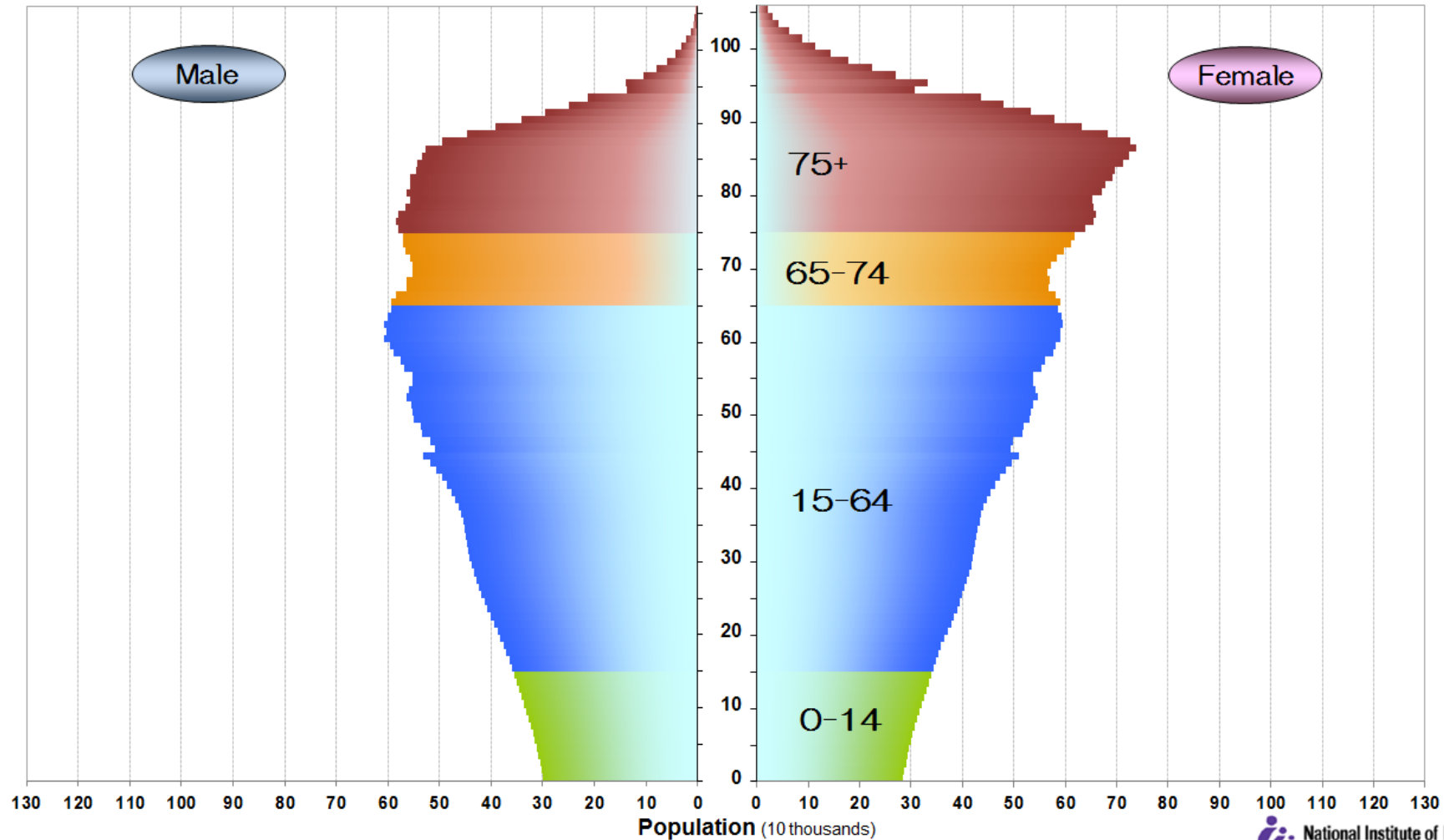
1980



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

Age Pyramid of Population

2060



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)

Type	National	Local Public	Private	Total	% of Private Schools
Universities	86	93	603	782	77.1%
Junior Colleges	0	17	314	331	94.9%
Colleges of Technology	51	3	3	57	5.3%
Total	137	113	920	1,170	78.6%

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%)

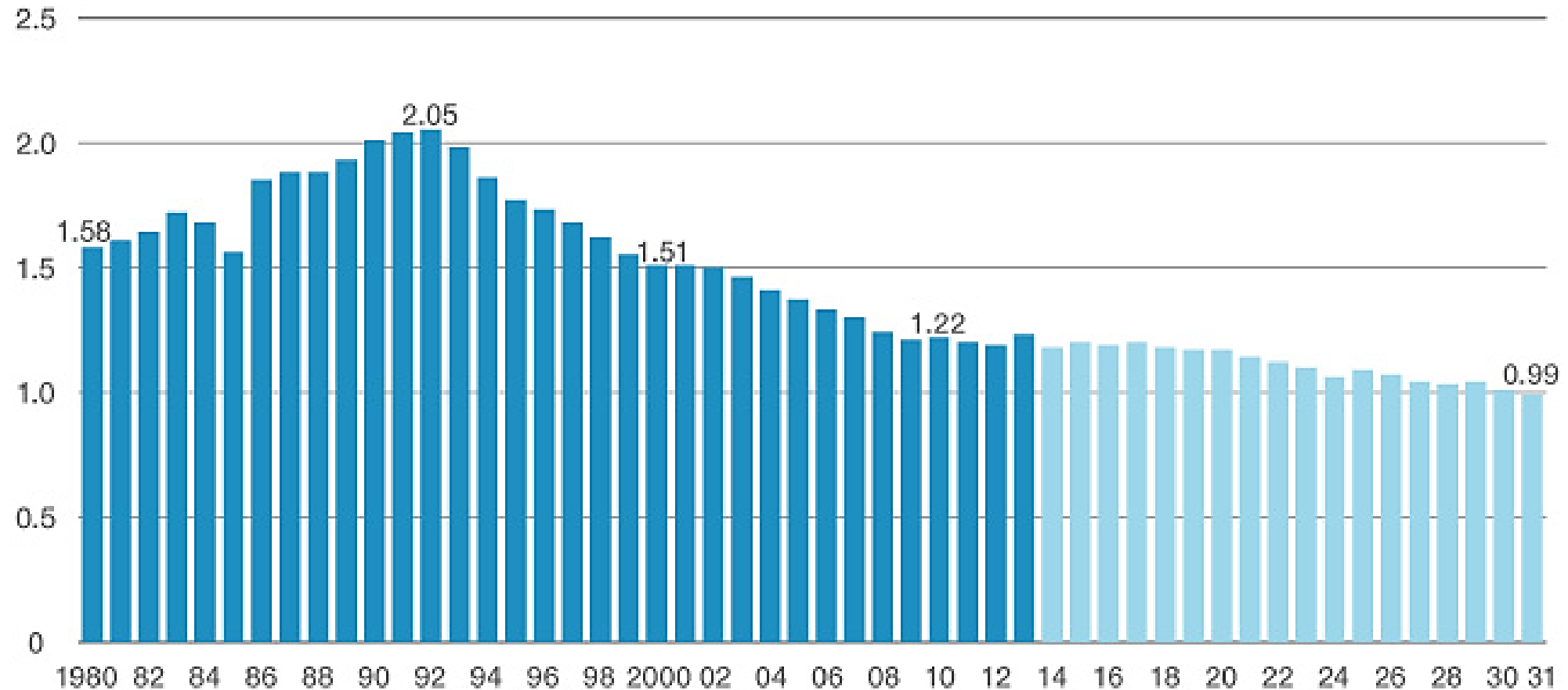
Source: Ministry of Education, Cultures, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) (2018)
Promotion and Mutual Aid Cooperation for Private Schools of Japan (2018)

“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

(millions)

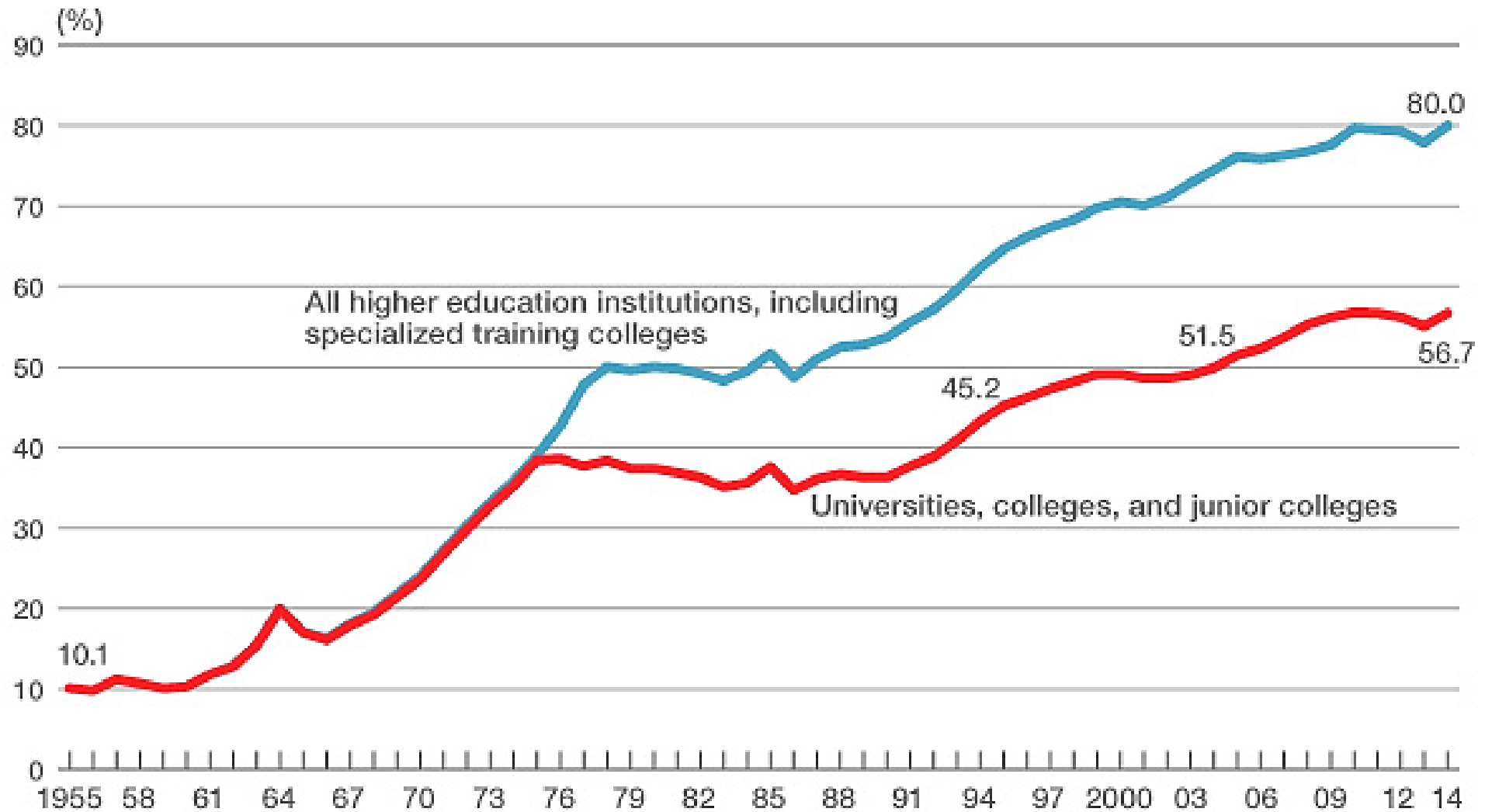


Compiled by Nippon.com based on data from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology and the National Institute of Population and Social Security Research.



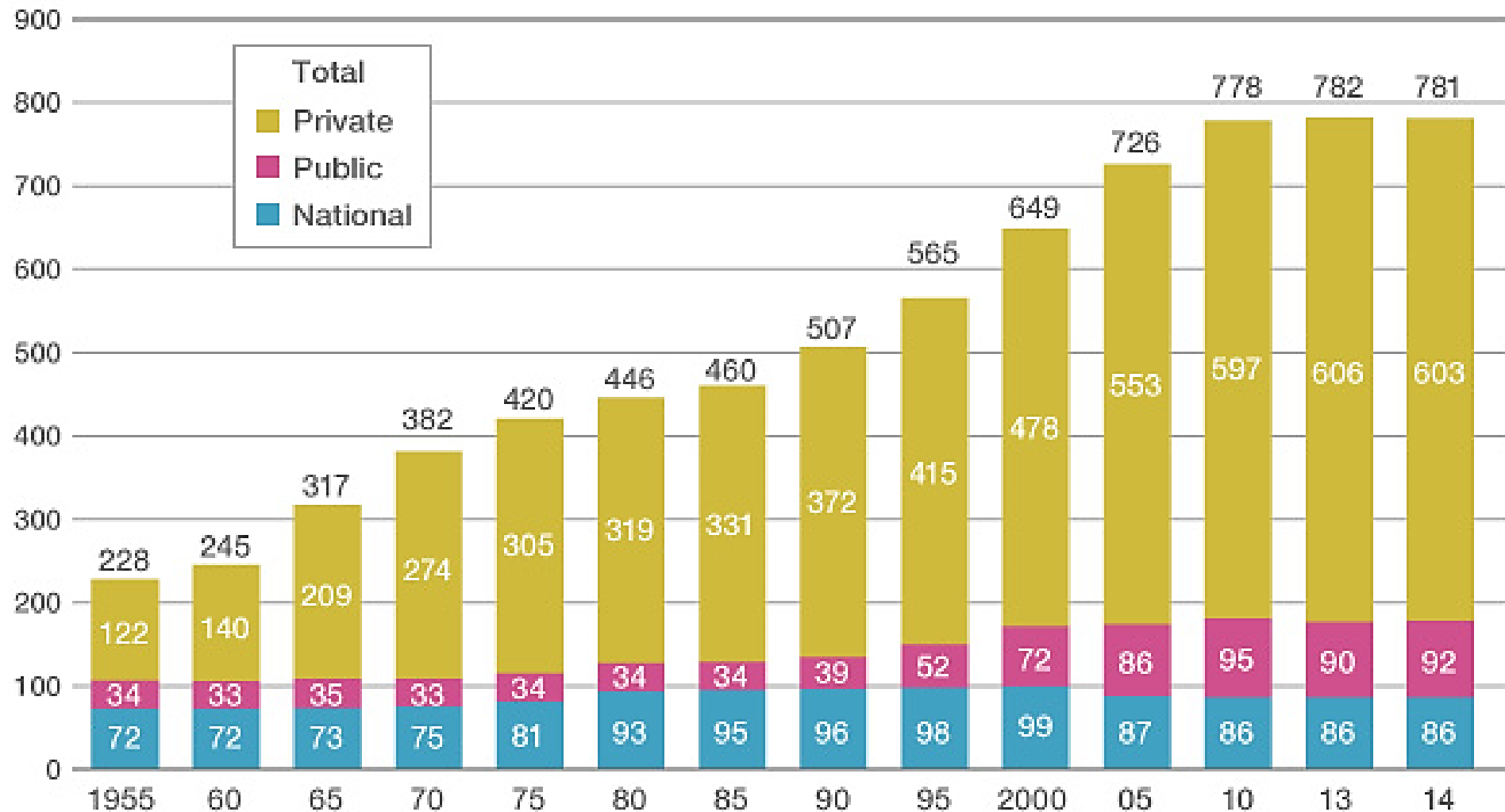
Source: Nippon.com (2015)

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



Compiled by Nippon.com, based on data from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology.

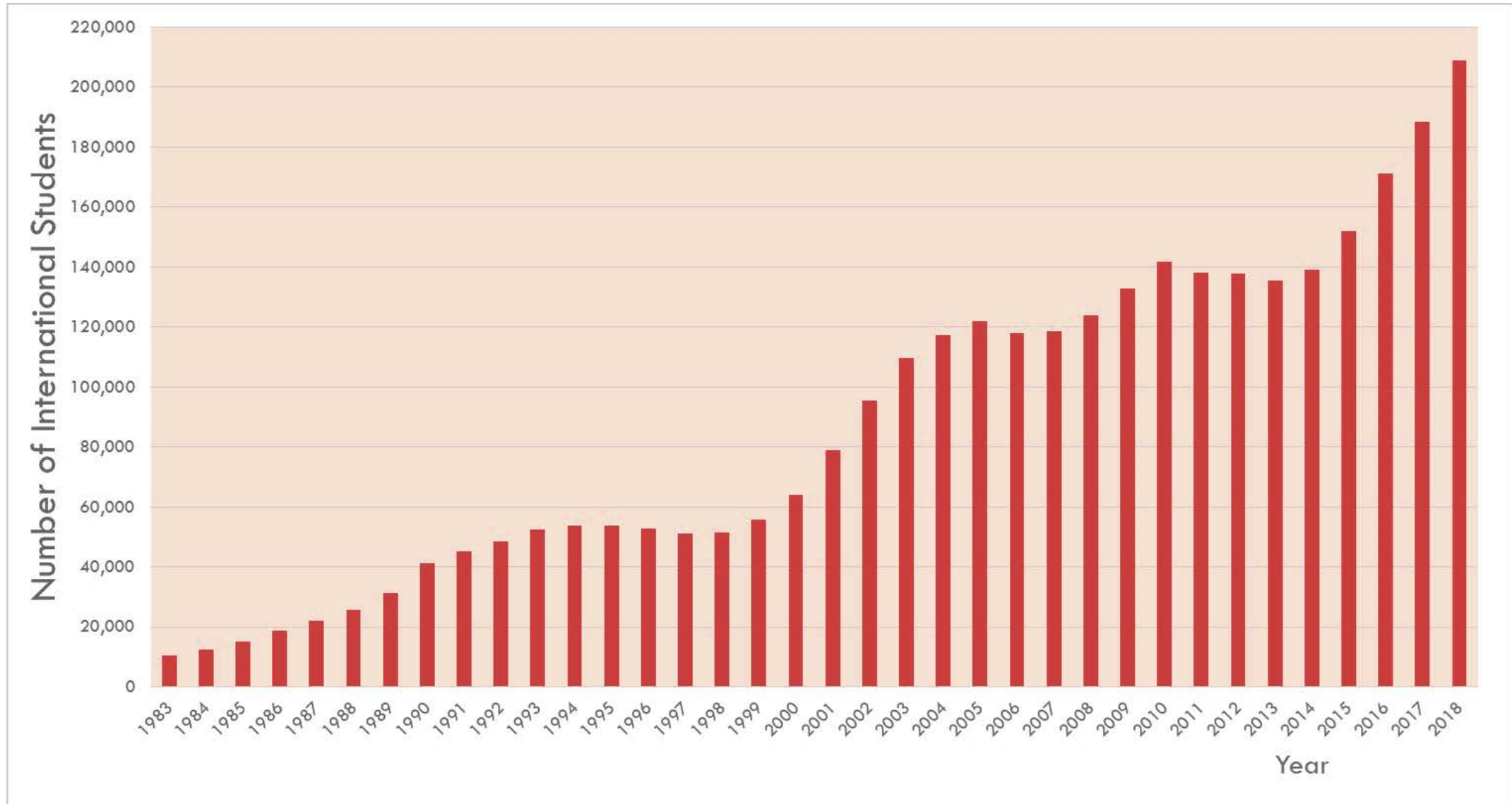
Figure 3 The Number of Universities in Japan, 1955–2014



Compiled by Nippon.com, based on data from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology.

International Students in Japan: Policy and Practice

Number of Int'l Students in Japanese Higher Ed.



Source: 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)

Country/region	Number of students		Comparison with last year	
	2018	2017	Number	% of total
China	114,950	107,260	7,690	7.2
Vietnam	72,354	61,671	10,683	17.3
Nepal	24,331	21,500	2,831	13.2
Republic of Korea	17,012	15,740	1,272	8.1
Taiwan	9,524	8,947	577	6.4
Sri Lanka	8,329	6,607	1,722	26.1
Indonesia	6,277	5,495	782	14.2
Myanmar	5,928	4,816	1,112	23.1
Thailand	3,962	3,985	-23	-0.6
Bangladesh	3,640	2,748	892	32.5
Others	32,673	28,273	4,400	15.6
Total	298,980	267,042	31,938	12.0

38.4%

Source: Japan Student Services Organization (2019)

Int'l Students Enrolled in HEIs and Language Schools

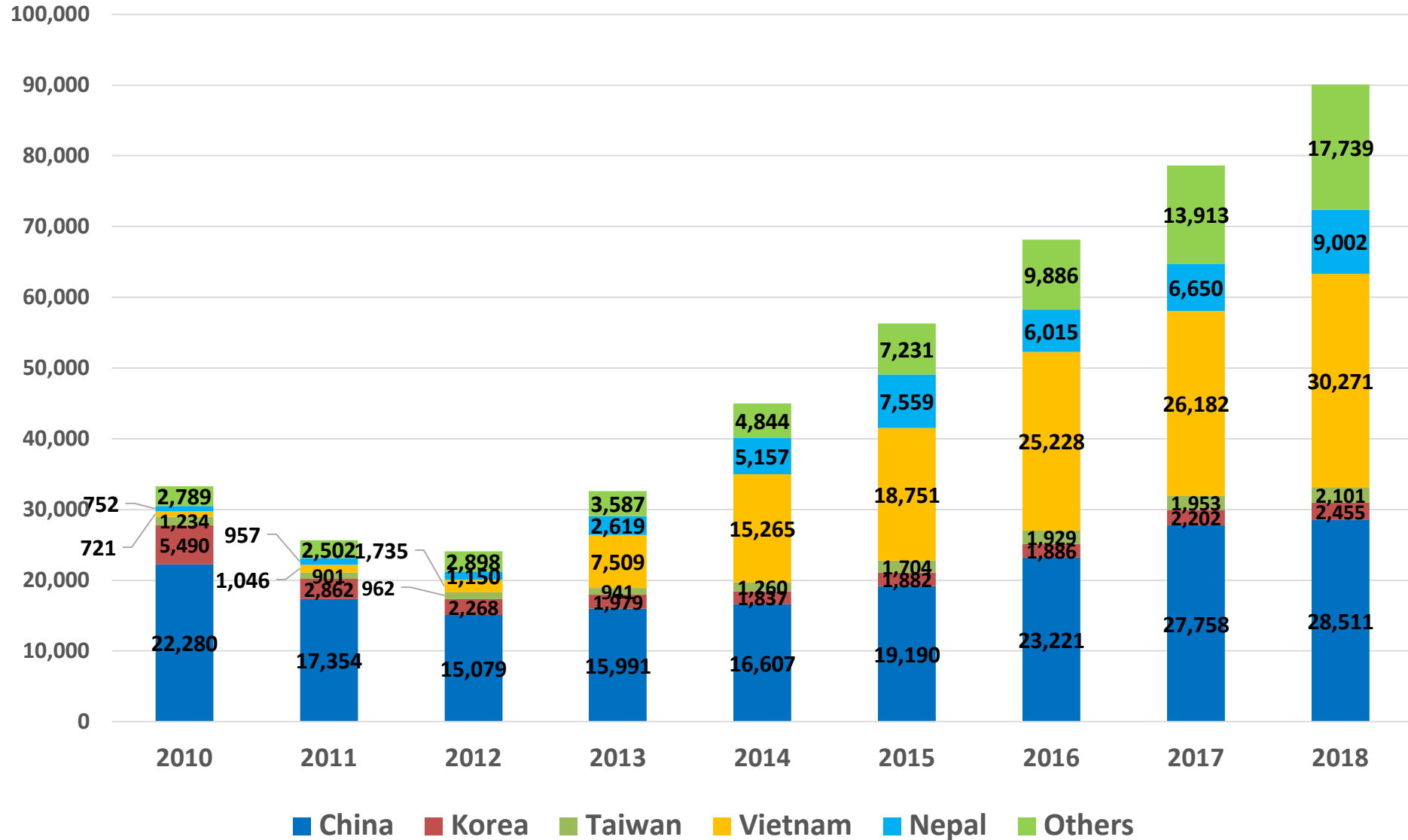
International Students in Higher Education Institutions			International Students in Japanese language institutes		
Country/region	Number of students		Country/region	Number of students	
	2018	2017		2018	2017
China	86,439	79,502	Vietnam	30,271	26,182
Vietnam	42,083	35,489	China	28,511	27,758
Nepal	15,329	14,850	Nepal	9,002	6,650
Republic of Korea	14,557	13,538	Sri Lanka	3,900	3,587
Taiwan	7,423	6,994	Myanmar	2,543	2,130
Indonesia	4,719	4,235	Republic of Korea	2,455	2,202
Sri Lanka	4,429	3,020	Taiwan	2,101	1,953
Myanmar	3,385	2,686	Indonesia	1,558	1,260
Thailand	3,241	3,266	Uzbekistan	1,427	606
Malaysia	2,897	2,750	Philippines	1,205	892
Others	24,399	22,054	Others	7,106	5,438
Total	208,901	188,384	Total	90,079	78,658

41.4%

33.6%

Source: Japan Student Services Organization (2019)

Int'l Students Enrolled in Language Schools



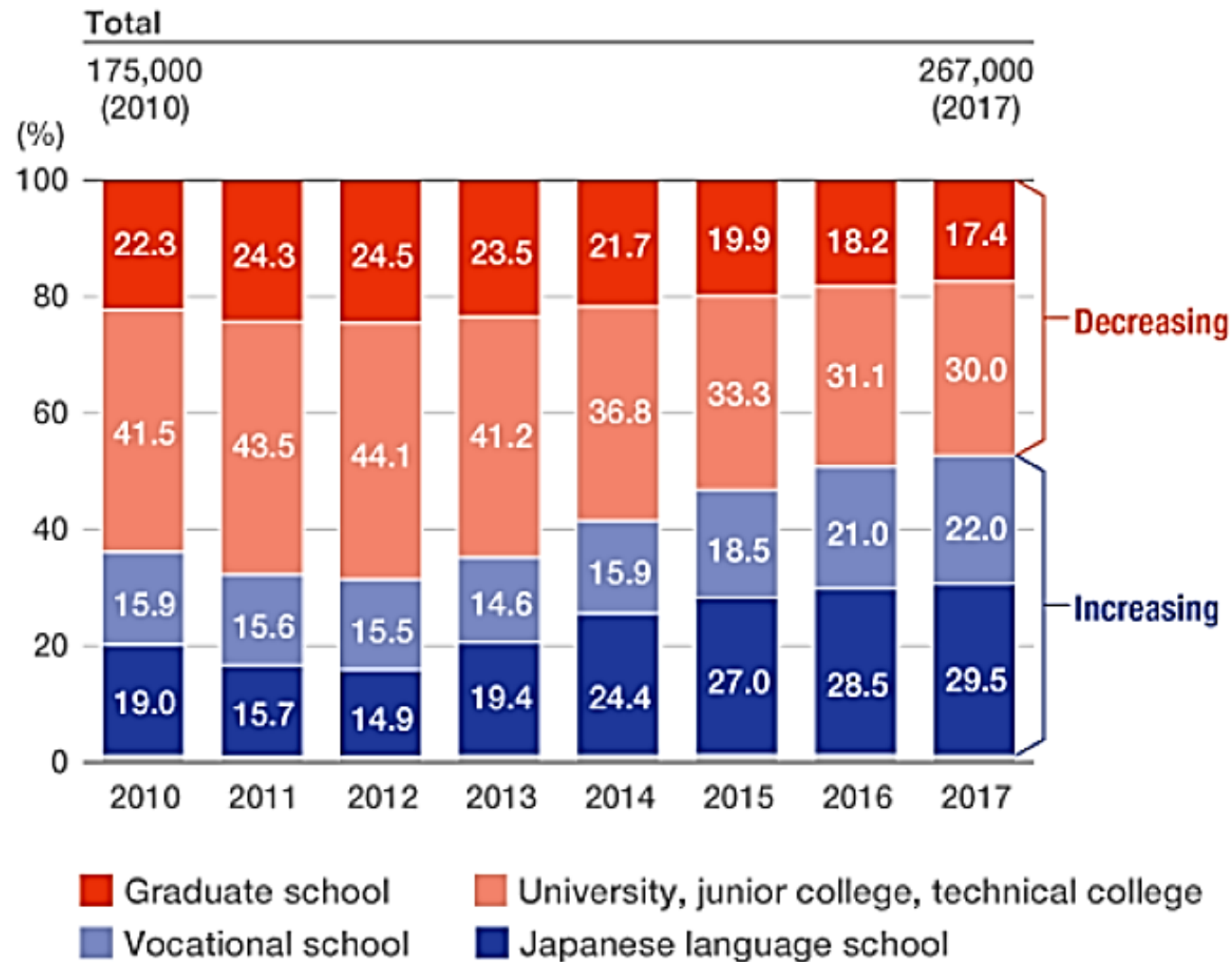
Source: Japan Student Services Organization (2010-19)

Changes in International Students

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

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

Changes in International Students



Source: nippon.com (2019)

Source: Japan Student Services Organization survey

nippon.COM

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)

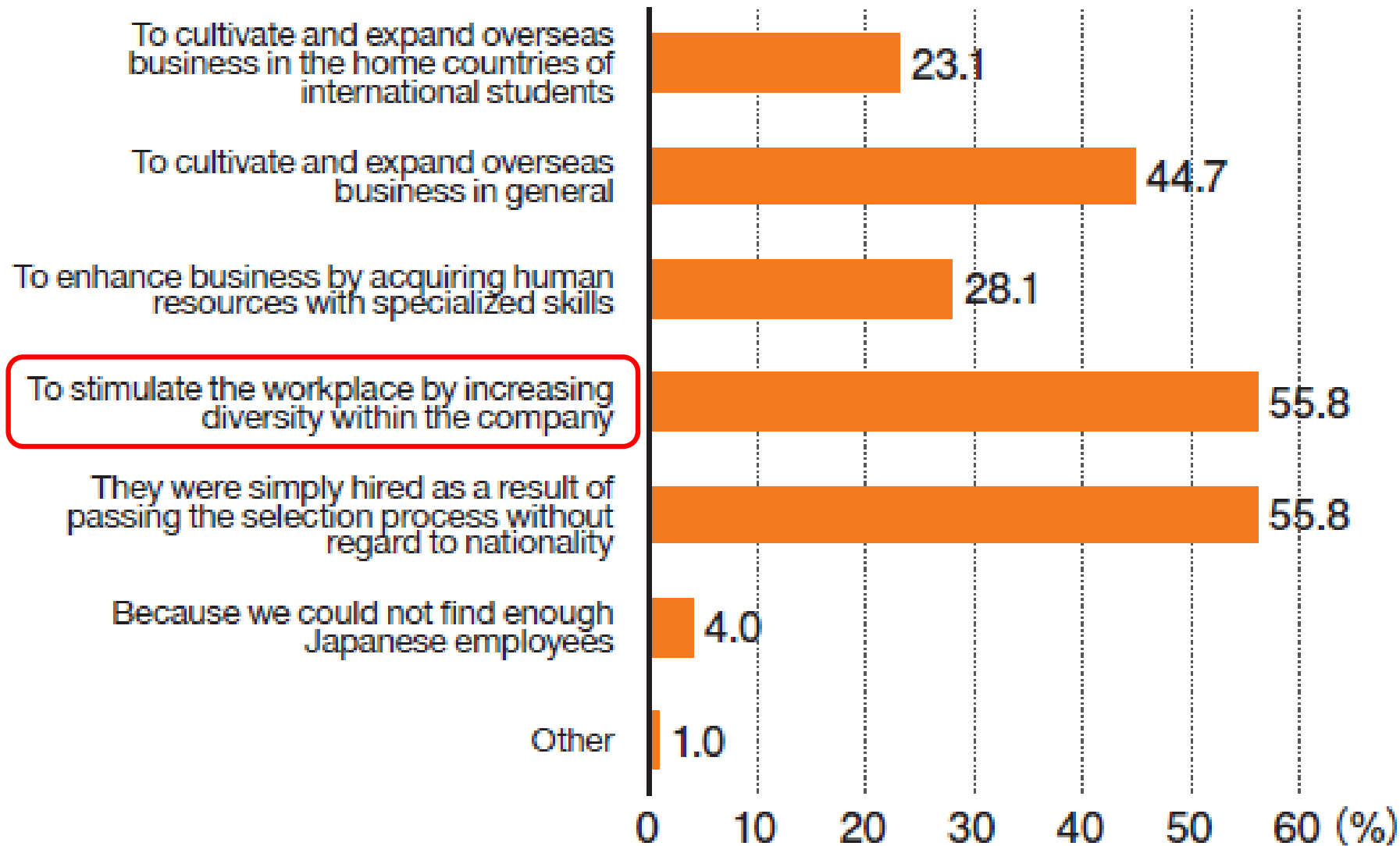
- Overall, Vietnamese and Nepalese students have made up for the decreases in Chinese and Korean students.
- Due to **the lack of Japanese proficiency and financial ability**, it's difficult for Vietnamese and Nepalese students to be accepted by universities, compared with Chinese, Taiwanese, and Korean 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

Reasons for hiring international students



Source: Ministry of Economy, Trade, and Industry (2015)

International students would be hired as a symbol of company's "diversity" (internationalization).

■ Skills/traits which employers consider to be important when hiring international students

Skill/Trait (%)	Manufacturing industry (%)	Nonmanufacturing industry (%)
Japanese language skills	64.8	75.7
Communication skills	55.2	65.4
Vitality	41.9	33.6
Enthusiasm	28.6	29.0
Specialization	26.7	22.4
English language skills	19.0	11.2
Imagination	14.3	14.0
Leadership	9.5	7.5
Where the applicant attended university	4.8	3.7
University academic record	1.9	1.9

“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)

★ Hair style

Long hair is not preferable. Be careful not to have any sleep-mussed or untidy hair, or any dandruff!

★ Face

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

★ 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

White is the basic color. Be sure to choose a shirt that fits you around the collar and sleeves. Pay attention when wearing a colored or patterned T-shirt or dark undershirt, because they can be seen through a white shirt. Watch out for a dirty collar and cuffs. 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 hems are preferable. Be sure to iron them to make 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 sneaker 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.

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. Be sure to dress, behave, and speak neatly so as to give a better impression to the other party.



★ Hair style

Either clip long hair behind your ears or gather it together at the back so that the ears are visible. Be careful not to have any sleep-mussed hair!

★ 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 perfume.

★ 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 cut too low. Choose something pleasant and clean.

★ Accessories

Simple pierced earrings should be fine. You should remove all your rings.

★ Suit

Solid dark blue, gray, or black suits are the basics. As a rule, wear a single suit 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.

★ Pantyhose

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



■ Bowing etiquette and posture

■ Full bow

This is the standard form of bowing in Japan, used to make a request or express appreciation.

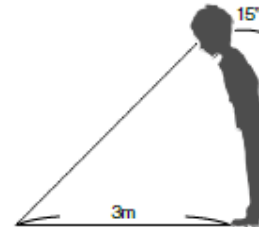
Angle = 30°
Eyes fixed on the ground about one meter away



■ Half bow

Used to acknowledge a colleague, for example when passing in the corridor

Angle = 15°
Eyes fixed on the ground about three meters away



■ Seated posture

How to sit with good posture

- Sit tall—stretch your back out
- Do not use the backrest
- Sit forward in your seat



Placement of hands and feet

• Women:

Keep legs together and place hands on the knees

• Men: Have legs slightly apart, clasp hands together and rest on thighs

• Try to keep your hands and feet still during the interview



“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.

Hiroshi Ota, Ph.D.

Professor

Center for General Education

Hitotsubashi University

E-mail: h.ota@r.hit-u.ac.jp



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