

Losing Steam: The Demise of the “Japanese Dream” among Prospective International Students

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Abstract: *Much like immigration, reasons to study abroad often relate to push and/or pull factors. Although attractive programs and courses can be major pulls for some prospective international students, financial matters such as tuition, living costs, and pathways to employment also have a significant influence. Since 2010 when Japan’s Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) initiated projects and activities to promote the internationalisation of universities, the number of inbound international students in Japan was steadily increasing, most of which were coming from East and Southeast Asia. This trend continued up until around 2018, and, understandably, rapidly declined in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and implementation of rigid border restrictions. While the pandemic undoubtedly played a major part in this downtrend, one cannot overlook the fact that enrollments and interest in studying in Japan was already losing steam. With its university rankings increasingly losing out to competitive universities in China and Singapore and its relatively low entry-level salaries amid a long-term recession, which has further been exacerbated by the weakened yen, the “Japanese dream” is arguably past its prime. While taking into account the contextual factors which influenced this trend, my study involved a critical discourse analysis of MEXT’s ambitious plan to somehow reverse this trend by bolstering further internationalisation, attracting highly-skilled foreign talent and essentially saving a sinking ship. The findings from this study may give institutions in the education and employment sectors an opportunity to reassess their current support systems and programs for lucrative foreign talent.*

Keywords: *internationalisation; education policies; discourse analysis; higher education.*

Introduction

Although impacted by the pandemic in early 2020, the flow of international students, for the most part, has been growing exponentially. According to UNESCO's findings, student mobility numbers doubled from 2000 to 2015, and this is also expected to bifold by 2025 (Guruz, 2011). In a European context, this has been easily enabled by the Erasmus+ programme. However, for non-EU based tertiary-level students, study abroad opportunities are often provided through one's university's exchange partnership agreements, whereby credits from classes taken abroad can be smoothly transferred to one's total credits. As a convenient and comfortable option, this is an attractive option for students wishing to venture abroad for a semester or two. For others with different motivations or aspirations, the so-called "degree-seeking" students, reasons to study at a specific university or in a specific country often relate to push and/or pull factors. Although specific degrees or courses with career paths can be major pulls for some international students, financial matters such as tuition, living costs, and pathways to employment also have a significant influence. Aware of its ageing and dwindling population (and therefore a lack of human resources), since at least the late 1990s, Japan started heavily investing in attracting international students and for a while, it worked. Since 2010 when Japan's Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (henceforth abbreviated to 'MEXT') initiated projects to promote the internationalisation of universities, the number of inbound students in Japan was steadily increasing, most of which were coming from East and Southeast Asia. This continued until around 2018, and then rapidly declined due to the COVID-19 outbreak and subsequent border restrictions. Naturally, the pandemic played a significant role in this downtrend, but enrollments and interest in studying in Japan were already losing steam. With its university rankings increasingly losing out to competitive universities in neighbouring countries like China and Singapore, and its relatively low entry-level salaries amid a long-term recession, (which has further been exacerbated by the weakened yen), the "Japanese dream" for most of these East/Southeast Asian students is arguably past its prime. While taking into account the contextual factors which influenced this trend, my study looks at the rhetoric in MEXT's ambitious plan to somehow reverse this trend by heavily investing into internationalisation at higher education institutions, and thereby attract highly-skilled foreign talent to save a sinking ship. The findings and discussions from this paper may give institutions in the education and employment sectors an opportunity to reassess their current support systems and programmes for highly lucrative foreign talent.

Context and media discourse

Thanks to the weakened yen and booming tourism industry, tourism studies and statistics paint a rather positive picture of international visitors to Japan. Major news outlet Reuters even reported that in spite of the record heat wave in mid-July 2023, "travellers are pouring in, taking advantage of a slide in the currency that has made holidays the cheapest in decades" (Kajimoto & Swift, 2023). While travellers are pouring in and, in turn, pumping money into the economy, they are impermanent. Naturally, this is unsustainable as a major source of revenue for the country. People need to come, stay, spend, and contribute— and this is where international students step in and serve an important role. As previously noted, the number of international students was steadily

increasing until 2018, but then the influx started to stall. Understandably, a range of factors have influenced the trend, but the recent lack of economic growth, and endless media reports on Japan’s dismal work conditions and culture of excessive overtime work cannot be overlooked. International and even domestic media reports seem to repeat the same rhetoric about the poor conditions for foreign workers and the brain drain of talent in Japan. Take, for example, a sample of headlines and excerpts from the following reports about Japan’s higher education and employment issues since 2018 (see Appendix 1).

Without performing a full discourse analysis, it is clear that reports have not been favourable and perhaps that the future looks bleak for Japan’s efforts to attract and retain foreign students and talented human resources. A simple sentiment analysis of the corpus of the headlines using the text mining tool *User Local* also reinforced that the texts were overwhelmingly negative in tone and leaned towards expressions of anger (see Figure 1).



Figure 1. Sentiment analysis of media reports

It must be noted, however, that it is difficult to make sweeping generalisations from such a small sample size. Furthermore, the tendency of news outlets to emphasise and capitalise on the mantra “bad news is good news” must also be taken into account. In any case, the major issues at hand based on the sample are: 1) Japan’s decline in global competitiveness, 2) Japan’s problems with attracting international students, and 3) Japan’s problem with securing and retaining human resources.

Part of the problem is that Japan is facing a population decline due to the ageing population and low birth rate. This has naturally resulted in a strained welfare system, lack of human resources, and therefore lack of global competitiveness in business. After the bubble economy went bust in the late 1990s, Japan struggled to attract foreign talent, so it revised its system for accepting international students in the early 2000s. In 2008 MEXT introduced the Global 30 which aimed to increase the number of international students in Japan to 300,000, and to help promote the overall internationalisation of higher education (MEXT, 2022c). Behind this was the intention to secure foreign talent, make Japan more competitive, to handle the ageing population problem, to promote mutual understanding, and foster Japanese students’ global competence. As previously mentioned

in the introduction, the number of international students in Japan was steadily increasing in the early 2000s, so in that sense, Japan’s mission was successful to an extent. However, the rate of employment for international students has proven difficult. The domestic employment rate for international students was merely 36.9% in 2019, which is still below the government’s target of 60% by 2033 (MHLW, 2021).

In addition, despite COVID-19’s negative impact on job seekers across the board, Disco Corporation’s employment rate survey conducted with over 2800 graduating students from 2019 to 2021 revealed that Japanese students are more than twice as likely to be employed than international students (Figure 2).

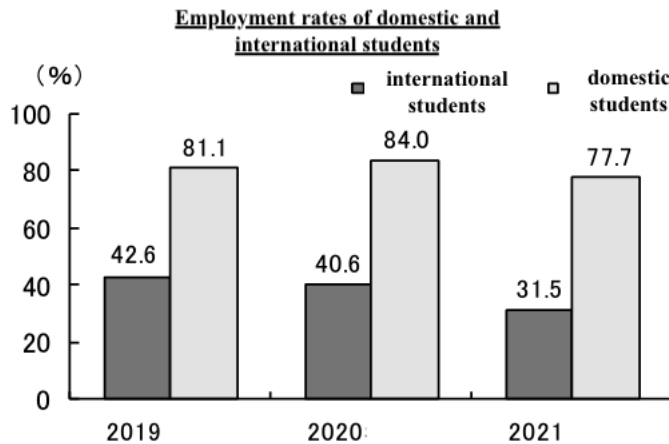


Figure 2. Employment rate comparison

Thus, based on media reports and rhetoric as well as employment statistics, MEXT is currently facing the problem of: 1) trying to attract and retain foreign talent or somehow encouraging its so-called “inward looking” students to study abroad, 2) internationalising its universities amidst dwindling global rankings, and 3) offering more courses or degrees taught in English (which is not guaranteed to attract domestic students). The following section will thus examine and analyse MEXT’s recent strategic proposal (released in late 2022) to deal with these matters.

Methodology

Prior to revealing the findings, a brief outline of the research methods is necessary. Basically, this study involved a critical discourse analysis of MEXT’s strategic proposal taken from its study group on “The Strategic Promotion of International Student Exchange,” which was released and uploaded on MEXT’s official website with several other documents in late 2022. The specific data set subject to analysis was Reference File 3 (“The Current Status of International Exchange in Higher Education”). The 66-page document essentially includes data and findings regarding the current inbound/outbound study abroad trends, statistics, and issues (MEXT, 2022c). In addition, and more pertinent, the document further reveals MEXT’s strategies to attract more international students and secure talented and high-skilled human resources. My approach involved a critical

discourse analysis based on Norman Fairclough’s (2013) three-dimensional framework. Fairclough’s approach to discourse analysis is as follows:

to make visible through analysis, and to criticise, connections between properties of texts and social processes and relations (ideologies, power relations) which are generally not obvious to people who produce and interpret those texts, and whose effectiveness depends upon this opacity. (1995, p. 97)

Fairclough’s three-dimensional framework for analysis involves a linguistic description of the language text, an interpretation of the relationship between (productive and interpretative) discursive processes and the text, and an explanation of the relationship between the discursive processes and social processes (1995, p.97). In this sense, I take into account the fact that the document was created by Japan’s current Ministry of Education run by the conservative Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) in a context of global recession and population decline. This also means that the contents might be of especial concern to both public and private universities hoping to attract international students, as well as businesses in fields with staff shortages or future economic prospects (such as IT, medicine, and engineering). By taking into account the text’s source and the intended audience, as well as the context of the transmission of the information, it is possible to conjecture the ideological intentions of the text and take a critical stance.

The Content Analysis: Findings and Discussion

General Issues to Consider

From page nine of the document, MEXT outlines its current concerns and approaches to handle the points of concern. These concerns have been summarised in the following points:

- In order to realise the LDP’s “new capitalism” concept, the government needs to invest in human resources, high-skilled workers, and foster the growth of globally competent citizens who embrace diversity.
- There is a need to recover the loss of foreign workers/talent that Japan failed to acquire or attract due to COVID-19.
- The government needs to promote more inbound and outbound study abroad programmes, attract diverse and innovative human resources, and create a more sustainable society.

Regarding the first point, one could argue that the LDP’s intention is to simply stimulate economic growth by employing highly-skilled individuals with global competence. As for the labour force issues related to the pandemic, instead of looking at other factors which may have driven potential workers to other nearby countries like Singapore or Australia, the Ministry of Education seems to be using COVID-19 as a scapegoat for pre-existing problems with attracting and retaining students and workers. To follow, the final statement is more or less an invitation exclusively for outstanding

human resources in the context of a rapidly ageing population and declining birth rate.

Strategies to attract exceptional international students - Scholarships

To follow, MEXT outlines its scholarship system (p.15) and allocation of funds (p.17) to entice more international students to study in Japan. An overview of the main aims and strategies have been summarised in the following points:

- To attract more foreign talent, MEXT has bolstered its scholarship funding system offering between 117,000 JPY per month to 145,000 JPY per month for undergrad to graduate level students.
- The aims of the scholarships are: “to attract excellent or exceptional foreign talent to Japanese universities, to strengthen Japan’s international relations, and to improve Japan’s global research-related rankings and performance”.
- More funds and scholarships are allocated to students in higher education rather than students enrolled in vocational schools, technical colleges, or Japanese language schools. Specifically, there were 4581 scholarships available for university students and only 730 scholarships for students at vocational schools, technical colleges, or Japanese language schools (p.17).

Firstly, regarding the monthly stipend, unless these scholarship recipients engage in part-time work or have an alternative and stable source of income, 117, 000 JPY to 145, 000 JPY is barely a livable amount, especially since the rise in the cost of living. As the University of Tokyo clearly states on its Financial Aid page, the “cost of living in Tokyo is the highest in Japan, a country already known for its high cost of living. The average monthly expense (tuition fees not included) [...] is JPY 137,061 for a single student” (University of Tokyo, 2023). As for the second point regarding the aims of the scholarships, the underlying issue is that Japan is struggling to compete in terms of quality of research output compared to the US and China, and is in a haste to change that by giving preference to excellent researchers instead of regular students. However, with overseas scholarship providers (such as DAAD) offering a variety of far more generous scholarships, it is going to be a challenge. Finally, when considering the allocation of scholarships, MEXT’s rhetoric of acquiring mainly excellent or exceptional tertiary-level students is repeated here and there is also emphasis on mainly helping students who might have financial difficulties. The problem with this, however, is that aside from technical trainees and language learners who most likely need financial support, Japan is missing out on acquiring exceptional researchers who are exempt from funding simply because they might be a bit better off.

Strategies to attract exceptional international students - Bolstering employment support

Taking into consideration the aforementioned issue of employment after graduation for international students, on page 18, MEXT reveals its plans to implement employment support programmes for graduates at over 50 higher education institutions by 2026, and additionally aims to reach a 50% graduate employment rate by 2025. The same page also includes a bar chart of international students’ employment rates (Figure 3, left) and a diagram which suggests that a “high quality education programme” comprises internships, Japanese language education, and career guidance (Figure 3, right). As previously stated,

the number of students who secured jobs started declining in 2018, thus reducing it to a COVID-19 issue is far too simplistic and disregards other diverse factors contributing to the problem (such as cultural and language barriers or systemic issues). While reasonable to an extent, the diagram that assumes that internships, Japanese language education, and career guidance equate to a high-quality education programme is also simplistic. What is crucial to investigate is why international students are not being hired, what is discouraging students from getting a job in Japan, and the problems with Japanese companies’ rigid recruitment methods, business styles, and work ethics.

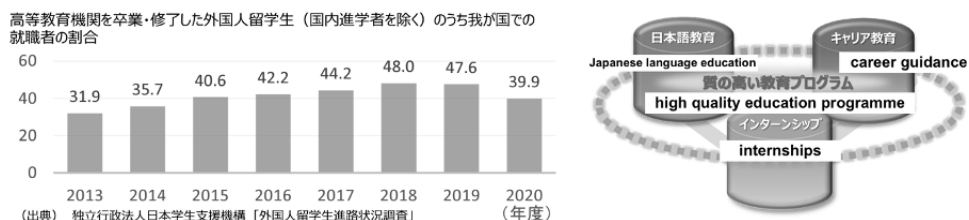


Figure 3. Employment rates of international students and factors contributing to a high-quality education programme

Strategies to attract exceptional international students - Online courses

Another one of the ministry’s plans in the document is the “Japan Virtual Campus” concept (p.22). The aim is to simply boost the amount of online courses for inbound and outbound students in a post-pandemic context. One of the goals is to promote the strengths and appealing points of Japanese universities. Other goals include increasing the amount of hybrid classes and on-demand classes, and increasing classes taught in English and Japanese classes which also promote “Cool Japan” ideology. While online courses are cost-efficient, practical for institutions and students with financial or mobility difficulties, and some students might even feel more motivated (Almaleki, 2021), the lack of interaction can have a detrimental effect on other learners (Esra & Sevilen, 2021). Essentially, the bottom line is that online learning systems are cost efficient for education institutions in Japan, and content that promotes “Cool Japan” ideology and the supposed strengths of Japanese universities is arguably soft power marketing masked as education.

Strategies to attract exceptional international students - Increasing partnerships

The ministry’s following proposition is to increase and strengthen Japan’s programmes and partnerships with universities overseas with a 1 billion JPY investment (marked in the darker shaded areas in Figure 4). However, there is a distinct emphasis on partnerships with universities in the United States. Aside from the obvious assumption that US universities provide more English language education programmes for outbound students, perhaps the other underlying incentive to increase partnerships in the region is related to the fact that US universities have traditionally dominated the global university rankings. Thus, attracting or even collaborating with elite or outstanding researchers from these universities is obviously an ideal situation for Japanese universities seeking to increase the quality of their research output and overall rankings.

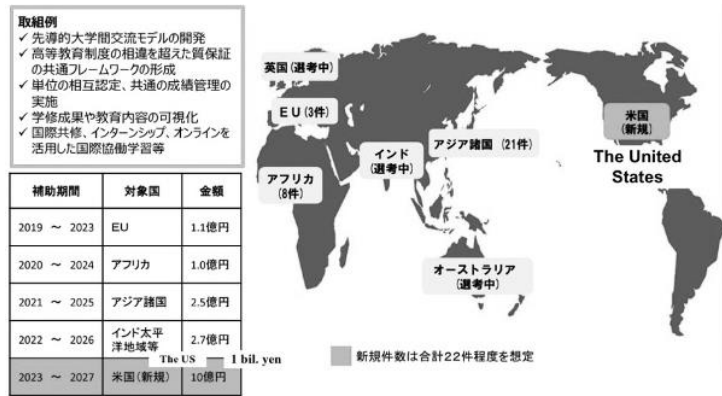


Figure 4. Countries to increase partnerships with

Strategies to attract exceptional international students - Focusing on skills shortage fields

According to the international student demographics in Japan based on students' majors (p.36), while Germany, Russia and the US attract engineering students, Japan is somehow failing to. Rather, most of the international students in Japan are enrolled in humanities or business and management courses. There are also few students in maths and computer science courses. These are ideally the students Japan is trying to attract and benefit from to remain globally competitive (rather than students in the humanities). The following is MEXT's list of the kind of students Japan expects to benefit from. As evidenced in Figure 5 below (p.61 of the document), engineering, corporate law, medicine, and agriculture are the areas of expertise Japan desires, yet, as noted, most students tend to enrol in humanities courses. The aforementioned fields of employment which are in demand are by no means specific to Japan. The shortage of medical staff in a number of countries was exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, but the World Health Organisation also estimates that there will nevertheless be a shortfall of 10 million healthcare workers by 2030 (WHO, 2023). Aware of its ageing population, Japan is in desperate need of aged-care workers as well as general practitioners. In addition, food security is becoming a serious issue due to Japan's low self-sufficiency rate of only 38%, which has been described as "the lowest among other major countries" (Lewis & Inagaki, 2022). Considering this context and the emphasis on "contributing to the stability of life in Japan," one could argue that the underlying motivation is for Japan to ensure the wellbeing of its own people from the opportunistic capitalisation of labour performed by foreign professionals. In addition, given that IT professionals and engineers are remunerated far better in Europe and North America, Japan is also seeing its own citizens migrate elsewhere for better opportunities and a comfortable work-life balance (Maeda, 2023). Trying to retain workers in these fields and persuade talented international students in these fields to study and work in Japan (rather than in countries offering generous salary packages and conditions) is going to be a challenge. Essentially, the expectations of students majoring in these fields are to primarily prevent the country (Japan) from going hungry, sick (resulting in staff shortages), and becoming less competitive (due to a lack of innovation and overseas business expansion). In short, the rhetoric is "What can we get from *them*?" rather than "What can *we* offer?" and this is arguably neither a sustainable nor ideal approach.

Field	Purpose/Contribution
Engineering	Students in engineering can contribute <u>in</u> a number of ways, including disaster prevention and environmental conservation activities through developments in the production of electricity, resources, and energy. In addition, they can build partnerships and connections overseas in a wide range of fields.
Social sciences (specifically corporate law)	With a focus on practical fields such as civil law and commercial law, by contributing to the development of laws in other countries, students from these fields will be beneficial not only for local companies, but also for Japanese companies hoping to expand overseas.
Medicine	Contribute to the improvement of medical standards in other countries through the development of medical professionals; contribute to the continuous operation of hospitals and other medical facilities established by Japan through ODA and other means
Agriculture	Contribute to the stability of life in Japan and its food security by increasing domestic food production and developing energy resources <u>through the use of biomass</u> .

(1) 外国人留学生受入れ施策の成果が十分に期待できる重点分野

工学	電気、資源、エネルギー、建築等の開発分野から防災、環境保全まで幅広く貢献できる基礎的な分野。多岐にわたり諸外国との関係発展に寄与。
社会科学 (法制度)	民法、商法等社会基盤を形成する実学的分野を中心に、諸外国の法整備等に寄与することにより、現地のみならず我が国の企業の現地進出等に有益。
医療	医療人材の育成による諸外国の医療水準の向上への貢献、ODA等により我が国が設立した病院等医療施設の継続的な運営に寄与。
農学	食料の増産、バイオマスの利用による資源エネルギーの開発等に貢献することにより、現地生活の安定、我が国の食料安全保障に寄与。

Figure 5. Students from fields Japan expects to benefit from

Strategies to attract exceptional international students - Scholarships for students in especially demanded fields

On page 62 of the document, the ministry further outlines how it will provide potential scholarships and programmes for international students in the four major fields mentioned above. The following is a summary of the intentions and plans:

Prioritised fields of study and plans

- Bolster MEXT’s Scholarship Programme for International Students (University admission based on the recommendation system).
- By using the “Special Programme for Preferential Placement of MEXT Scholarship. Students” (for graduate school), students can apply for (and be accepted in) programmes in the fields of engineering, social sciences, medicine, and agricultural science.

Evidently, MEXT is focusing on graduate students and attracting more talented researchers or human resources rather than the average undergraduate student in humanities or Japanese language courses. Because Japan is offering greater or more generous opportunities for exceptional graduate-level students, ordinary undergraduate students are being overlooked as valuable human resources. The problem with this is that these students will seek opportunities elsewhere, especially countries that offer higher or competitive wages. Also, it is highly likely that exceptionally talented graduate students would first search for medicine, law or engineering postgraduate degrees in renowned, prestigious, or top-ranked universities in Europe or North America which offer courses in English. The difficult job application process, emphasis on strong work ethics and company loyalty, poor work-life balance, and stagnant or uncompetitive salaries arguably make seeking employment in Japan undesirable. Talented human resources will go where they are treated better and paid better and that is the harsh reality Japan now faces.

Conclusion

In this article, the rhetoric in Japan’s Ministry of Education’s most recent and ambitious plan to attract outstanding research students (and in turn, highly-skilled workers) to Japan

was analysed and discussed. The basic media discourse analysis of news articles concerning Japanese higher education spanning from a pre- to post-pandemic context revealed that media reports tended to focus on: 1) Japan's decline in global competitiveness, 2) Japan's problems with attracting international students, and 3) Japan's problem with securing and retaining human resources. While bleak or negative in tone, this is the backdrop of the current situation in Japan and the reason why the Ministry of Education is heavily investing in attracting international students and possible human resources. By means of critical discourse analysis, a further analysis of MEXT's strategic proposal to attract more international students was also conducted. The findings and discussions revealed that the proposal's neoliberal bias framed international students as "investments" or mere sources of labour rather than knowledge-seeking individuals. By primarily focusing on scholarships for exceptional students from specific regions (where Japan's overseas expansion is expected) and in specific fields (where labour is in demand), Japan is creating obstacles for ordinarily talented students beyond these regions or majoring in different subjects. Although Japan is trying to raise the bar by placing greater emphasis on excellent scholars (who would probably study at highly-ranked and renowned universities elsewhere), it is digging its own hole in a context of population decline and a lingering economic recession. As noted earlier, the findings and discussions from this paper may give institutions in the education and employment sectors an opportunity to reassess their current support systems and programmes for lucrative foreign talent. Thus, here are some points which need to be considered or addressed: 1) rather than focusing on exceptional researchers or students, higher education institutions in Japan need to attract a diverse range of students in various fields and majors to secure human resources and encourage innovation; 2) the Ministry of Education needs to extend or provide more generous scholarships to students who deserve them; and 3) universities and businesses need to provide career pathways and encourage a complete overhaul of the strict and complicated recruitment procedures in Japan to ensure graduates stay. Lastly, aside from simply offering scholarships and internationalising its universities with a handful of international students and token English-speaking adjunct lecturers, Japan needs to internationalise its communities and companies because if this fails to change, graduates will seek employment in countries that boast more cultural diversity, tolerance, and lifestyles that value a comfortable work-life balance. With its rapidly ageing and dwindling population paired with its deteriorating competitiveness and economic robustness, observing Japan's plans and policies in action may serve as a lesson or model for countries facing similar problems in the near future.

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Appendix A — Media reports concerning education and employment

Media Outlet/Source	Headline	Excerpt/Lead
Asahi Shimbun (Japan) (May 10, 2023)	Foreign students trying to work in Japan met with high hurdles	“ ‘Foreign students alone are usually blamed for not being able to find a job, in some way,’ she said. ‘That extinguishes their enthusiasm’. Foreign students are valuable resources in Japan as it is going through a labor shortage, observers said”
Japan Times (Japan) (Jun.22, 2022)	Will a ¥10 trillion fund be the savior of Japan’s universities?	“ ‘Global performance will require much greater global engagement, not just bringing in foreign students, but acting like an international place in the middle of Japan,’ he said. ‘There are great foreign students in Japanese universities, but they’re kind of on the side’ ”
Nikkei Asia (Japan) (Dec.22, 2020)	Japan losing global talent race, Suga economic adviser warns	“Japan’s inability to attract foreign employees despite years of globalization efforts damages the country’s financial services sector and other fields crucial to future growth”
Nikkei Asia (Japan) (Jan.3, 2022)	Japan misses foreign talent as companies seek strong linguists	“Many Japanese companies are missing out on opportunities to employ highly qualified foreign nationals with valuable skills because of their insistence that recruits have high Japanese skills”

Nikkei Asia (Japan) (Jan.22, 2022)	Japan weighs longer stays for world's elite college graduates	"Move aims to boost competitiveness by easing job hunting for skilled foreigners"
Nikkei Asia (Japan) (Jun.22, 2022)	Now admitting: Japan aims to regain 300,000 foreign students	"The number of international students in Japan slid from more than 310,000 in fiscal 2019 to 242,000 in fiscal 2021. The drop was even deeper for Japanese students going overseas, from about 107,000 in fiscal 2019 to 1,400 in fiscal 2020"
Nikkei Asia (Japan) (Nov.5, 2022)	Without internationalization, Japanese higher education is sinking	Keeness for English "has helped China's institutions of higher education continue to rise in global rankings while Japan's slide"
Nippon.com (Japan) (Aug.16, 2022)	Restarting International Study in Japan in the Post-COVID Era	"The falling number of international students and the declining proportion of international students finding work in Japan after graduation is likely to have a negative impact in many ways, hampering companies' ability to expand overseas and develop products for overseas markets, and making it harder for the country to attract inbound tourists and secure the necessary human resources in fields like nursing care"
Kyodo News (Japan) (Dec.31, 2022)	Japan ranks 41st in attracting talent in 2022: Swiss Survey	"Japan ranked 41st out of 63 economies in 2022 in attracting and retaining foreign talent, down two spots from a year earlier and the fourth straight year in decline"
The Mainichi (Japan) (May.7, 2019)	'Life has become so hard': Nepali student's suicide shows problems of Japanese dream	"In a survey Gyawali carried out in 2018 on 353 foreign students, 198 (56%) said they suffer from stress caused by financial concerns, while some 115 (33%) of respondents feel anxiety from having no one to help them here"
Asia Times (International) (Dec.31, 2021)	Japan pays a high price as it goes down market	"Japan is becoming a "cheap" country in terms of, not just its prices, but also its human resources. It has abysmally low starting salaries for graduates, and – exacerbating existing labor shortages – is facing a brain drain [...] Japan is on course to becoming a poor nation, dependent on tourism, where the young and brightest minds leave the country for better jobs with better pay"
Deutsche Welle (International) (Aug.12, 2022)	Japanese universities losing battle with foreign rivals	"A shrinking population, fewer foreign students, falling government support and greater overseas opportunities pose serious challenges for tertiary education in Japan"
The Washington Post (International) (Nov.1, 2022)	Japan asks if it's better to flip burgers than work at a megabank	"The situation has some fretting about the risk of a brain drain, as the young go in search of opportunities abroad. Conversely, the health-care and construction workers that Japan has been trying to coax from overseas may find the country a less attractive destination when they calculate how much their wages are worth back home"