

Internationalization of Higher Education: Global Trends and Japan's Challenges

Hiroshi Ota*

This paper discusses the meaning of the internationalization of higher education in Japan, based on a review of global trends in this area. Globalization has brought major changes to higher education, and in order to deal with them, the Japanese government has promoted internationalization as an important policy for higher education reform with a series of competitive funding programs. Universities in Japan, too, have made efforts to internationalize themselves. Despite the government's policy initiatives, the internationalization of Japanese higher education has not been understood as a high-priority issue at the institutional level, with many examples of superficial or partial add-ons of the international aspect, and has even been criticized as unable to contribute to transformative change at universities. Internationalization tends to be used as a means to prevail in the domestic competition between universities (inward-facing internationalization) and does not necessarily result in initiatives which lead to the improvement of learning in a globalized environment.

All in all, the government's competitive funding projects for internationalization have indeed intensified domestic competition among universities. However, it is not certain that the funds have increased the international competitiveness and compatibility of Japanese higher education as a whole.

Keywords: internationalization; globalization; policy initiatives; international students; study abroad

Globalization, which transfers people, goods and services, money, information and ideas rapidly across national borders, is having a major impact on higher education. Rapid economic development, centered on Asia, is accompanied by a rise in the global demand for post-secondary education, and in response to this, the massification and diversification of higher education are moving ahead, bringing about the marketization and commodification of higher education together with increasing access. At the same time, the gap between the uni-

* Hitotsubashi University, Tokyo
email: h.ota@r.hit-u.ac.jp

versities supporting the fringes of massified higher education and leading universities is growing ever wider. In addition, huge academic networks linking the world's universities are being set up, with international competition and cooperation in education and research taking place simultaneously. Representative examples of competition are the growing influence of world university rankings and the creation of world-class universities. Examples of cooperation include international university alliances centered on research-intensive universities, consortia for international student exchange, cutting-edge scientific and technological research carried out by global networks of researchers, and the diffusion of joint, double, and dual degree programs. Moves to increase the international mobility of students and researchers are also becoming ever more prominent, and against a background of the emergence of English as the de facto international common language of academia and research, the number of EMI (English as a medium of instruction) courses and programs offered by universities in non-English speaking countries (particularly in Europe and Asia) continues to grow (Rose & McKinley, 2017).

However, when it comes to the burden imposed by globalization, wealth is increasingly polarized and poverty more prevalent, leading to terrorism and insurgency. Against a background of such problems, nationalist, anti-immigrant and xenophobic sentiment have been rising in recent years in a backlash against globalization; moves to prioritize the interests and the prosperity of one's own nation are intensifying; and there are concerns that the internationalization of higher education may be affected (Albach & de Wit, 2017).

This paper discusses the meaning of the internationalization of higher education in Japan, based on a review of global trends in this area. It goes on to examine the policies and challenges of the internationalization of Japanese higher education and to discuss the outlook for the future.

1. Global Trends in Internationalization of Higher Education

In the mid-1990s, a process or organizational approach to internationalization at the institutional level was introduced by Knight (1994). She defines internationalization as the "process of integrating an international and intercultural dimension into the teaching, research and service functions of the institution" (p. 7). This definition has been widely used to describe internationalization. However, considering the limitations of the institutional-based definition and the generalization of the definition, Knight (2008) proposed an updated definition, stating that "[i]nternationalization at the national, sector, and institutional levels is the process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of higher education" (p. 21).

In addition, Hudzik (2015) has propounded "comprehensive internationalization," defining the concept as intentional, institutional commitment and action to infuse and integrate international, global, and comparative content and perspective throughout the teaching, research, and service missions of higher education. Beyond such basic functions of higher education institutions, he argues that the comprehensive approach is the overarching intention to integrate internationalization into the core institutional ethos, values, and mission (Hudzik, 2015). Furthermore, he emphasizes that for "comprehensive internationalization," it "is essential that it be embraced by institutional leadership, governance, faculty, students, and all academic

service and support units” (Hudzik, 2011, p.6).

From the above definitions of internationalization by Knight and Hudzik, it can be said that internationalization is a multifaceted and multidimensional process integrating international, intercultural, and global content and dimensions into the functions and aims of higher education institutions and systems. Therefore, they suggest that simply putting in place add-on programs labeled “international,” of the so-called “island program” type, cannot be called internationalization in the original sense of the term. Since many of the programs of this kind are not designed to integrate with the existing internal structures or education and research activities, they may act as a form of window dressing, raising the university’s international image externally, without fundamentally changing its substance. In its original form, internationalization is not its own purpose or goal. The goal is university reform and qualitative improvement from a global standpoint, and internationalization is the means and the process of realizing this. The emphasis is on internationalization as an ongoing and continuing effort, with an evolutionary or developmental quality to the concept (Knight, 2008).

Recently, “globalization” has come to be used more frequently than “internationalization” in higher education; in many cases, it can be observed that in spite of the persistence of a similar orientation, internationalization has simply been replaced by globalization, with an eye to novelty. Examples are “globalization of the university,” “globalization of students and staff,” “globalization of the curriculum,” etc. University faculties, departments, and sections are increasingly using “global” in their names rather than “international.” However, Knight (2008) separates the two conceptually, saying that globalization promotes internationalization (globalization is a catalyst for internationalization), while internationalization is a reactor for globalization. At the same time, the two are said to relate to each other as mutual agents of change. Therefore, when compared with a country such as America which spearheads and drives forward globalization, there is a tendency towards reactive or passive internationalization in Japan and other non-Western, non-English speaking countries. Whatever the case, internationalization at the level of individual universities can be said to be a means and process of redefining the nature and role of one’s university in a globalized world, and of reforming the university in this direction (Ota, 2011).

In the past three decades, internationalization has shifted from the fringe or periphery of universities to become part of their core territory, and attitudes towards internationalization have changed from reactive to proactive. At the same time, the understanding of internationalization has moved from being one of concept and rhetoric to one of action and reality. Internationalization initiatives, too, have changed from imitating or attempting to catch up with other universities, based on the mindset of “doing what others do (keeping up with the Joneses),” to mission-oriented initiatives based on the characteristics of each individual university. Internally, too, there is a visible trend away from the creation of add-on and ad-hoc international programs by each faculty or department in favor of a strategic and institution-wide approach towards internationalization (Brandenburg & de Wit, 2011; Hudzik, 2011; Ota, 2014). In relation to such trends, leading universities in many countries have come to adopt mid-to-long term strategies which bear in mind responses to globalization and the global competition between universities. Internationalization is then addressed as a central issue by such university strategies.

In the worlds of higher education and of scholarship, the global dominance of US higher education has been reinforced through the diffusion of American systems and practices as the

global standard. For instance, the introduction of the credit-based system and of the two-cycle system of Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Europe under the Bologna Process could be called the import of the American university system (Ota, 2014). Such trends are linked to the linguistic dominance of English under globalization, leading to an increase in the number of international students aiming to study at universities in America and other English-speaking countries. Moreover, the policy of charging international students the full cost of academic programs in the UK and Australia, and the application of out-of-state tuition fees by US state universities, led to an increase in university income. As a result, in universities in those countries in particular, intense competition to acquire self-funded international students arose in the name of "internationalization." At the same time, higher education was positioned as a service industry, and a trade and revenue generation approach towards the recruitment of international students and an international student market became established (OECD, 2004).

Against a background of economic development, population growth, and insufficient domestic higher education provision in Asia, international student mobility was greatly massified, changing from study abroad for the elite with government support for the sake of national development, to study abroad funded by the individual (ordinary students) for the sake of self-realization. Currently, many countries are promoting the internationalization of higher education as a national policy. In particular, international student recruitment targets are being set, such as 350,000 students in Germany, 450,000 in Canada, and 500,000 in China, not only intensifying the worldwide competition for highly-skilled human resources ("talent war") (British Council, 2017), but also leading to the problem of a brain drain from developing countries. Accordingly, universities have made an effort to appear attractive to international students by promoting internationalization. On the other hand, a wariness is spreading in Asia towards an overly business-oriented approach to international student recruitment by universities and their agents, and the ethics and dignity of the internationalization of higher education are being called into question.

In non-English speaking countries, since it is difficult to generate revenue through a trade and business-oriented approach to internationalization such as the one used in English-speaking countries, internationalization is seen as high-cost and low-return. Additionally, not only were transparency and accountability demanded with regards to the education and research activities of universities, evaluation using key performance indicators (KPIs), a core feature of a focus on outputs, has been introduced. Thus, there are demands for outcomes to be made more visible as the evaluation of international programs becomes widespread¹. However, short-term evaluation of internationalization which overemphasizes quantitative outputs, e.g., the numbers of study abroad students, international students, partner institutions, and courses offered in English, overlooks qualitative outcomes and the long-term impacts of internationalization as well as creating a situation in which internationalization itself becomes the purpose or the goal and the achievement of numeric targets becomes the top priority. Although policies of internationalization through quantitative expansion have been able to add a veneer of internationality or increase the outward-facing international image, it cannot be said that internationalization initiatives are being used as a means for qualitative reform of the university as a whole. It has been pointed out that this tendency is strong in the Japanese government's policy initiatives for the internationalization of higher education through competitive funding projects (Gayardon, Shimmi, & Ota, 2015).

In order to encourage the efficient distribution of resources for internationalization and the appropriate analysis of results, the development of highly effective assessment methods is being called for, but this process is still underway and is encountering many problems. For example, assessments based on self-evaluation tend to become a mere formality, with the conduct of the assessment itself frequently becoming the aim. In addition, the quantitative expansion of international programs is stretching universities to their limits, leaving no spare capacity for the collection of assessment-related data (Ota, 2014).

Globalization of higher education increases not only the international mobility of students, researchers, teaching and administrative staff but also the mobility of education institutions and programs such as branch campuses and offshore programs. Moreover, while global higher education is tending to converge, regionalization (regional integration) is occurring in Europe and Asia under internationalization with the examples of ERASMUS+ and the Bologna Process in Europe and the ASEAN University Network (AUN) in Asia. Opinions diverge as to whether to see this as resistance to or as a stage on the way to globalization (Kuroda, 2016).

2. Internationalization of Japanese Higher Education

In Japan, universities have had a close relationship with internationalization ever since the Meiji era. For Japan, a country in which higher education developed relatively late, internationalization could justifiably be called a national strategy, and in this sense, internationalization had the aspect of a systematic undertaking (Ota, 2012). While the roles played by foreign (Western) professors and Japanese students who were sent to study abroad by the government in the early Meiji era may have been a classic example of passive or reactive internationalization, they were highly significant. In other words, the Westernization and modernization of Japanese higher education, a process oriented towards its inclusion in international society, can be understood in the same way as internationalization (Huang, 2006). The development of higher education and the promotion of internationalization took place simultaneously. Nevertheless, during the process of modifying the universities established on a Western (German) model in order for them to become independent, they became progressively more Japanese, creating a higher education system with the University of Tokyo at its pinnacle. The problem with this Japanese system is the low rate of mobility between universities of academics and students. Where domestic mobility was low, international mobility became even lower, acting as an impediment to internationalization (Kaneko, 2007).

With the subsequent development of the country and its universities, the Japanese government made substantial efforts to promote international exchange programs, such as the Japanese Government Scholarship (started in 1954) and the 100,000 International Students Plan (from 1983 to 2003). As a result of these intentional efforts to internationalize, Japan has become one of the most popular destinations for study abroad students in Asia.

In the process of the development of the internationalization of Japan's universities, the internationalization of the curriculum and of educational content were not treated as core issues in comparison with initiatives related to international student mobility. This is because, from the Meiji era right up through the present, Japanese universities have played the role of importing the most advanced Western knowledge, science and technology and of teaching

this to students. Even without touting the internationalization of the curriculum, teaching materials and lecture content were fundamentally based on Western models. In addition, courses dependent on individual expertise were the rule, and there were insufficient attempts to separate the curriculum from faculty and to develop it independently. As a result, there were few examples of international study programs developed in conjunction with the curriculum, or of the increase in international students having an influence on educational content or curriculum development (Ota, 2011).

Nor were there many cases in which the university as a whole tackled internationalization systematically. This is likely to have resulted from the high degree of academic autonomy of each faculty or department, especially within national universities. This autonomy meant that the institutionally organized activities of the university were relatively weak, particularly with regard to internationalization, and there was little leadership for exploring comprehensive internationalization strategies for the university as a whole. However, this tendency was to change significantly as a result of the Japanese government's policy initiatives for university internationalization, which are described below.

3. Internationalizing Japanese Higher Education: Policies and Challenges

Amid the remarkable rise of Asian nations such as China, South Korea, and Singapore, the relative decline of Japan's national strength and appeal is striking. Japan was the first in Asia to enter the group of developed nations, and its success in reaching number two in the world in terms of economic strength deserves to be commended, but ironically, this was connected to a weak sense of urgency in the face of the major turning-point between one era and the next represented by globalization, and there are more and more voices pointing out the delay in responding to globalization. Higher education is by no means an exception, and the Japanese government has pushed ahead with internationalization as an important policy for higher education reform.

This section reviews the government's policy initiatives for the internationalization of Japanese higher education as well as examining universities' responses to such initiatives and challenges, including unintended consequences.

(1) Internationalization Policy

In recent years, a series of national policy initiatives have promoted internationalization, with a particular focus on student mobility, educational partnerships, and international rankings. Key examples include the 300,000 International Students Plan, Global 30, Go Global Japan, the Inter-University Exchange Project, and the Top Global University Project, which, collectively, entail three major quantitative targets as follows (see also Table 1):

- Increase the number of international students studying in Japan from 135,000 in 2013 to 300,000 by 2020 (300,000 International Students Plan, Global 30, and Inter-University Exchange Project).
- Increase the number of Japanese students studying abroad from 60,000 in 2010 to 120,000 by 2020 (Japan Revitalization Strategy, Go Global Japan, and Inter-University Exchange Project).

- Situate 10 Japanese institutions among the top 100 universities in world university rankings within ten years, i.e., by 2024 (Top Global University Project).

Table 1 Government’s Policy Initiatives for Interracializing Japanese Higher Education with Numerical Targets

		2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	
1	300,000 International Students Plan (Inbound mobility)	Inbound: 300,000 in total																
2	Japan Revitalization Strategy (Doubling the number of study abroad students)	Outbound: 120,000 in total																
3	Global 30 (Inbound mobility)	13 universities Inbound: 10,000																
4	Inter-University Exchange Project (Two-way mobility)																	
	CAMPUS Asia and ASEAN	13 programs Outbound: 1,687; Inbound: 1,867																
	North America and EU	12 programs Outbound: 2,484; Inbound: 1,673																
	ASEAN	14 programs Outbound: 3,045; Inbound: 3,631																
	AIMS with ASEAN	7 programs Outbound: 746; Inbound: 759																
	ICI-ECP (EU)	5 programs Outbound: 69; Inbound: 61																
	Russia and India	9 programs Outbound: 1,086; Inbound: 1,130																
	Latin America & the Caribbean, and Turkey	11 programs Outbound: 1,159; Inbound: 1,295																
	CAMPUS Asia and ASEAN	25 programs Outbound: 3,279; Inbound: 3,789																
	Russia and India	9 programs Outbound: 1,157; Inbound: 1,084																
5	Go Global Japan (Outbound mobility)	Type A (University-wide): 11 univs.; Type B (Faculty-specific): 31 univs.; Outbound: 58,500																
6	Top Global University Project (Comprehensive internationalization)	Type A (Top Type): 13 universities Type B (Global Traction Type): 24 universities																

Source: Assembled by the author based on MEXT (2017a), (2017b), (2017c).

Note 1: CAMPUS Asia stands for Collective Action for Mobility Program of University Students in Asia and is a trilateral student exchange program run by China, Japan and Korea, as the East Asian version of the Erasmus Programme in Europe.

2: AIMS stands for ASEAN International Mobility for Students Program and is a government supported multilateral educational program in the ASEAN region, launched in 2010 by coordinated efforts of Malaysia-Indonesia-Thailand and the current members including Vietnam, the Philippines, Brunei, and Japan.

3: ICI-ECP (Industrialised Countries Instrument - Education Cooperation Programme) refers to EU cooperation with Australia, New Zealand, Japan, and Korea in the field of higher education and vocational education and training.

The internationalization of Japanese universities has been driven by competitive funding projects such as those listed above. Universities which applied for these competitive funding projects were judged not only on their concepts, aims, plans, targets, and concrete programs, but also on whether these were systematic initiatives by the university as a whole. In particular, since the Top Global University (TGU) Project, which began in 2014, was a large-scale policy initiative with the intention of promoting comprehensive internationalization, raising the university’s position in world university rankings, and responding to global standards, this point was emphasized. The TGU demanded of applicant universities the formulation of action plans covering 24 items grouped under the three main headings of internationalization, governance, and education reform, and the establishment of 16 main numeric targets with their subordinate targets². These numeric targets become key performance indicators (KPIs), with the degree of attainment of the selected universities being monitored by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) at periodic intervals. Global 30, Go Global Japan, and the Inter-University Exchange Project also involved the setting of KPIs, although comparatively fewer than those for the TGU, and the establishing of concrete numerical targets is a condition of application for candidate universities.

Why did MEXT start to build KPIs into their funding projects? The reason is that MEXT believes that these KPIs can increase transparency and fulfill accountability for a large proportion of funds allocated to a small number of universities. However, the problem is that achieving the KPIs has often become a purpose or goal in itself at the selected universities. Eventually, the administrative side tends to end up counting all the apparently relevant numbers for each numerical target so that it becomes a kind of “numbers game” of KPIs. Numerical targets should be considered as a means or a guide to achieving the vision and goals of the funding projects as well as of the university’s internationalization efforts. In reality, however, achieving numerical targets becomes the first priority. The internationalization efforts of those universities selected for the funding projects focus on the micro-management of the numerical targets in order to cope with periodic checkups by MEXT and to continue to receive funding throughout the designated period (Shimmi & Yonezawa, 2015). Moreover, as mentioned above, competitive funding projects require applicant universities to set all the numerical targets at the application stage, which causes another problem. On one hand, some universities tend to set unreasonable numbers in the hope of being selected for a competitive funding project. On the other hand, many universities give up on applying for a funding project since it is too difficult for them to set all the numerical targets, which appear as harsh requirements due to their limited institutional capacity for internationalization. Yoshida (2016) argues that the distribution of competitive funds based on the principle of selection and concentration is creating competition within a limited scope while denying a large number of universities the opportunity to participate and making a small number of “winners” stronger and stronger as a result. The winner institutions then often struggle to achieve the too ambitious targets which they themselves set, and their students also suffer since the numerical targets, for instance TOEFL or IELTS scores, do not take into account the reality of students’ abilities. Nevertheless, universities would still like to be the winners of this competition since successful selection for a competitive funding project can be used as an effective recruitment tool in the domestic student market by arguing that they are among a few institutions selected as models of “global universities” by MEXT. Media coverage boosts this effect still further.

MEXT’s competitive funding projects for internationalization have indeed intensified domestic competition among universities. However, it is not certain that the funds have increased the international competitiveness and compatibility of Japanese higher education as a whole. Under these competitive funding projects, the internationalization strategies and efforts of selected universities are becoming more similar due to the frameworks, goals, and targets stipulated by MEXT from the application stage. There does not appear to be much freedom for universities to devise their own, unique ways of internationalization. Furthermore, MEXT’s competitive funding projects have a structural problem. Such funding projects were originally intended to provide seed money (funds) to selected universities, using which they would work to develop programs which would become models (good practice) and which would be disseminated to other Japanese universities. However, contrary to these intentions, there is a strong tendency for universities which obtain a subsidy to use specially appointed professors and contract staff employed only for the duration of the funding period to move ahead with internationalization on the “island” model. In many cases, when the provision of subsidies comes to an end, the program also disappears. There are some cases in which new funding is obtained and the program continues, but these are few in number. The ripple ef-

fects of new programs set up through competitive funding projects on the university as a whole are limited, and attempts to continue such programs within the university using the institution's own funds (internalization) after the funding period and to make them sustainable face major difficulties. Ultimately, the promotion of internationalization has a tendency towards over-reliance on MEXT funding, and the current situation is a far cry from autonomous university internationalization (Ota, 2016).

In addition, the TGU program has a fundamental problem. Raising universities' positions in the world university rankings on one hand and improving the quality of internationalization and international education on the other are two separate matters that do not seem directly connected (Yoshida, 2016). The position in rankings is a result of the enhanced quality of education and research. Thus, enhancing the quality of education and research through internationalization should come first. Raising the position of universities in the rankings should not be a purpose or goal in itself.

(2) Language

When it comes to the internationalization of education, it is important to improve the quality of English as a medium of instruction (EMI) courses and programs at the same time as increasing the number thereof. In Japan, arguments against EMI, including from those based on an ideological standpoint, remain deep-rooted even today. Nevertheless, considering the improvement of the English language abilities of students in non-English speaking countries and the spread of EMI, the provision of quality EMI courses and programs not only increases the potential to attract a variety of international students from around the world, but also enables the students of one's own university to be sent around the world on student exchange and double or joint degree programs (two-way student exchange between multiple countries increases). Moreover, it can contribute to the cultivation of global citizens with intercultural communication skills. The quantity and quality of EMI courses and programs are becoming an indicator of a university's level and prestige, and have come to influence whether or not student and researcher exchange with world-class universities will take place. Put another way, the ability to conduct education and research in English has come to determine the degree to which Japanese universities can get involved with global academic networks centering on world-class universities, and the degree to which they can function as important hubs in these networks (Ota & Horiuchi, 2017).

However, internationalization is not simply a case of conducting as many courses in English as possible. What is demanded is the duality of Japanese and English (the use of two languages), taking into consideration the academic discipline and the nature of the course, even if it entails high costs. Moreover, since English is gaining greater currency in Asia, mechanisms to use English as a gateway to increase study experiences in Asia for students and to induce them to study Asian languages are also important.

A point about Japanese language education also deserves to be made here. Even if EMI courses and programs increase, the need for Japanese language education in no way diminishes. Rather, the number of international students hoping to learn Japanese from the beginner level grows, making the enhanced provision of education suitable for a broad range of Japanese language learners a necessity. Japanese is undergoing a shift from being an entrance requirement for studying at university to becoming part of the content learned (taught) at university (Ota, 2015). Considering the fact that there are currently only 60 active Japanese

language institutes affiliated with Japanese universities and colleges (Federation of Japanese Private Colleges and Universities Associations, 2017), the government should support Japan's leading universities in taking the initiative to create Japanese language education hubs and, by providing a diverse range of Japanese language education, from short-term to long-term and from beginner to advanced level, becoming an entry point to study in Japan. In doing so, partnerships with existing private Japanese language schools should be included from the standpoints of resource sharing and greater efficiency (Kato, 2012).

(3) Study Abroad

The Japanese government is moving ahead with a policy of raising the number of Japanese studying abroad to 120,000 by 2020 under the Japan Revitalization Strategy, and is increasing the budget to expand study abroad programs and participants, such as the Inter-University Exchange Project (support for universities), and for scholarships for study abroad (support for students). MEXT's budget for study abroad scholarships was expanded greatly from 600 million yen in 2009 to 9.2 billion yen in 2015, and stands at 8.1 billion yen in 2017 (MEXT, 2017b). Due to these policy initiatives, short-term study abroad participants during university study are rapidly increasing. The number of short-term study abroad students, which was around 36,000 in 2009, rose to more than 96,000 by 2016, more than doubling. The number of those studying abroad for less than a month, in particular, grew significantly, reaching 60,000 students, 62% of the total, in 2016 (those studying abroad for less than six months accounted for 82%). On the other hand, long-term degree-seeking study abroad numbers peaked at 83,000 students in 2004, and had fallen by 35% to 54,000 in 2015 (MEXT, 2017c). Study abroad by Japanese students is shifting from study abroad for a degree to study abroad for credits (McCrostie, 2017). MEXT's support for universities' study abroad programs and scholarships for students has expanded the range of study abroad participants. How, however, can universities encourage students to aim for the heights of success after their first, short-term study abroad experiences? This issue becomes even more important when we consider the return on investment for study abroad. According to the policy evaluation of the promotion of global human resources development carried out by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, the perception on the corporate side is that a study abroad period of six months or more is necessary in order to develop various skills including language ability, intercultural understanding, and the ability to accept a diversity of values. The evaluation, therefore, pointed out a mismatch between the increase in study abroad by university students and corporate needs (MEXT, 2017d).

In the English-speaking world, study abroad for credits is already the norm, with much importance attached to short-term study abroad positioned as part of the university curriculum as "education abroad" and to the learning of each individual student, leading to the development of "learning abroad," made up of diverse overseas experiences including volunteer work, service learning, and internships. Assessments of the learning outcomes of study abroad and of the impacts on students' lives and careers are also carried out as part of the process. It is essential that Japanese universities collaborate with these initiatives. As the opportunities for students to gain study abroad experiences increase, universities should consider the whole period which students spend with them from matriculation to graduation, setting out a roadmap which keeps in mind the stratification of study abroad programs and progression routes (relating study abroad to future careers or further study) (Ota, 2016).

(4) International Students

One of the major issues surrounding internationalization is perhaps that even now, when the target of the 100,000 International Students Plan has been reached and the number of international students at higher education institutions is over 180,000, Japanese universities have not substantially changed. Universities have perhaps been content with the ability of the many international students from Asia, in particular China, South Korea, and Taiwan, to fit in well to Japanese universities, and have not taken the initiative to reform themselves qualitatively - in other words, to undertake transformative internationalization. China, South Korea, and Taiwan are rapidly developing their economies and higher education with the intention of converting themselves from source countries for international students to host countries. The fact that the numbers of international students from these three countries, which have a shared linguistic background based on Chinese characters, are now flat or even declining is connected to a stagnation in the number of international students at Japanese higher education institutions (a growth of 46,000 students since 2010). It is pointed out that the falling numbers of students from the above three major source countries are being compensated by an increase in study at Japanese language schools by students from Vietnam, Nepal, and Sri Lanka. However, for international students from these new source countries, acquiring the Japanese language ability needed for university study within two years (the maximum period of study at Japanese language schools laid down by the Immigration Law) is difficult; moreover, since these students have few economic resources, the number going on to study at university is not increasing. Furthermore, the rise in the number of international students aiming to find work in Japan is becoming a social issue; despite the fact that the original aim of the 300,000 International Students Plan was to secure highly-skilled human resources from overseas, the actual situation is that they are currently being utilized to make up for a shortage of unskilled workers (Osaki, 2017).

As globalization advances, Japan's universities are required to integrate the education of the nation's citizens and international education from a global standpoint. It is necessary to raise the international applicability and compatibility not only of the content of university education, but also of systems, such as the academic calendar, and of the operational side, such as the language used for instruction (EMI). In addition, since a transition is underway from the "era of increasing international students in order to internationalize," as seen in the 100,000 International Students Plan, to an "era in which international students from around the world gather at internationalized universities," it should be realized that Japanese universities' slowness to internationalize is one of the causes of the stagnation in international student numbers at universities over the past ten years (Ota, 2016). As the transition to a knowledge-based economy and globalization move rapidly ahead, it can be said that the recruitment of excellent international students and their retention after graduation is what determines a country's economic strength. In Japan, where the working-age population is set to decline sharply in the near future due to a low birthrate and aging society, proactively and continuously attracting high-quality human resources from overseas to sustain the society and economy is an urgent issue. Nevertheless, affected by the enhancement of support for Japanese students to study abroad, the MEXT budget to support international students has been steadily reduced, from 34.7 billion yen in 2009 to 26.3 billion yen in 2017. For this reason, projects to support international students and their host institutions, such as Subsidies for Tuition Reduction and Exemption for International Students and Assistance for International

Students' Medical Expenses, have been abolished (MEXT, 2017b).

As stated in the outline of the 300,000 International Students Plan, it is necessary to create a framework in partnership between industry, government, and academia, to secure international students from abroad, develop them within Japan to become highly-skilled human resources, have them take jobs at Japanese companies, and allow them to settle in Japan (MEXT, 2008). Bold systemic reform and deregulation by the government, along with the introduction of an immigration policy, will provide the impetus to promote this policy. For universities, it is essential to create an environment in which international students study and live together with Japanese students, which will lead to the cultivation of human resources who can act as bridges connecting Japan with various foreign countries (Ota, 2016).

4. Implications and Conclusion

This final section analyzes the trend of the government's policies for the internationalization of Japanese higher education and presents the policy implications for universities.

The internationalization of Japanese universities developed with the promotion of hosting international students at its core, as is shown by the two major policies, the 100,000 International Students Plan and the 300,000 International Students Plan. However, from the mid-2000s, the Japanese government has come to place greater importance on support for Japanese students studying abroad. This policy change is tied in with the lengthy economic slump and political climate in Japan. MEXT has moved rapidly to promote greater outbound mobility in order to reverse the trend of a prolonged decrease in the number of Japanese study abroad students. Vigorous promotion of outbound mobility has been carried out, backed by robust funding. Although this policy change has generally been welcomed by Japanese students, their parents, and the higher education community, it has led to a reduction in assistance for international students enrolled in Japanese higher education institutions and has been partially responsible for the recent stagnation in student inflows from overseas. The ultimate goal of those funding and scholarship programs is to revitalize the Japanese economy. More specifically, it is for Japanese graduates to work for Japanese companies that will do business around the world, enabling these to become more successful. Powerful economic pressure favors this policy initiative. The demand for global human resources is growing, and higher education is being asked to cultivate such human resources. However, the term "global human resources" is used here to refer specifically to Japanese students, and furthermore is overly biased towards the improvement of English language ability (Yoshida, 2016). Rather, what is increasingly required is the nurturing of global citizens, both international and Japanese students, who can play active roles in global society, something which goes beyond the development of human resources who will be useful in the global economy.

Regarding the relationship between a globalizing world and Japanese higher education, it has been pointed out that Japanese universities are influenced by the fact that their *raison d'être* was the translation of the most advanced Western scholarship, science and technology and the pursuit of ways to apply (utilize) this in Japan. In turn, the universities have always been protected by the language barrier of Japanese and have not been subjected to true global competition (Kariya, 2014). Therefore, despite many government's initiatives, the internationalization of Japanese higher education has not been understood as a high-priority issue at

the institutional level, with many examples of superficial or partial add-ons of the international aspect, and has even been criticized as unable to contribute to transformative change at universities (Ota, 2014). The fact that internationalization tends to be used as a means to prevail in the domestic competition between universities (inward-facing internationalization) and does not necessarily result in initiatives which lead to the improvement of learning in a globalized environment can be adduced as a cause of these problems. One example of this phenomenon is that in recent years, the number of International Studies and Global Studies faculties have increased, but although the majority of such faculties conduct classes in English, they are not open to the world regarding international admissions, acting as EMI programs for Japanese students (Ota & Horiuchi, 2017).

In many Asian countries, higher education is developing rapidly alongside economic growth, with the simultaneous promotion of university internationalization. Japan imported the university model from the West in the Meiji era, building a distinct, mature higher education system at an early stage. However, this has become a factor delaying the response to globalization. If the internationalization currently required of Japanese higher education were to be divided into several elements, these could be stated as the incremental raising of universities' (1) international applicability and compatibility, (2) openness, (3) flexibility, (4) connectivity, (5) mobility, and (6) diversity. If (1) can be achieved, this will lead to (2), and if (2) can be achieved, it will lead to (3). In this way, moving ahead with (1) through (6) as a chain reaction will result in the advancement of internationalization at the institutional level. Bold deregulation and broad expansion of university autonomy by the government are essential in order to facilitate this chain reaction model of internationalization.

Internationalization plays the role of a catalyst, prompting universities to reform themselves in order to be able to respond to the demands of the global knowledge society. This means that the coming era will see intense questioning of higher education and of the quality of its internationalization, and that the true value of Japanese higher education will be interrogated from a global standpoint.

Notes

- 1 For example, as the duration of study abroad shortens, where government scholarships are provided to students or subsidies are given to universities to develop programs, the demands to clarify students' learning outcomes or the benefits of the program become stronger
- 2 See the following website (MEXT, 2016) for details about the 16 main numerical targets. <http://www.mext.go.jp/en/policy/education/highered/title02/detail02/sdetail02/1395420.htm>

References

- Albach, P. G., & de Wit, H. (2017, September 15). The new nationalism and internationalisation of HE. *University World News*. Retrieved from <http://www.universityworldnews.com/article.php?story=20170914073027157>
- Brandenburg, U., & de Wit, H. (2011). End of internationalization of higher education. *International Higher Education*, 62. Retrieved from <https://ejournals.bc.edu/ojs/index.php/ihe/article/view/8533>
- British Council. (2017). *10 trends - Transformative Changes in Higher Education*. London: Author.
- de Gayardon, A., Shimmi, Y., & Ota, H. (2015). Internationalization over time: policy evolution in Japan. In R. M. Helms, L. A. Rumbley, L. Brajkovic, & G. Mihut (Eds.), *Internationalizing Higher Education Worldwide: National Policies and Programs* (pp. 73-80). Washington D.C.: American Council on Education. Retrieved from <http://www.acenet.edu/news-room/Documents/National-Policies-and-Programs-Part-1-Global.pdf>
- Federation of Japanese Private Colleges and Universities Associations. (2017). *What Are Japanese*

- Language Institutes Affiliated with Universities and Colleges?* Tokyo: Author. (Published in Japanese). Retrieved from http://www.shidai-rengoukai.jp/s_courses/index.html
- Hudzik, J. (2011). *Comprehensive Internationalization: From Concept to Action*. Washington D.C.: NAFSA-Association of International Educators. Retrieved from http://www.nafsa.org/_/File/_/cizn2011_execsummary.pdf
- Hudzik, J. (2015). *Comprehensive Internationalization: Institutional Pathways to Success*. New York: Routledge.
- Huang, F. (2006). Internationalization of higher education: examining its definitions, In N. Furushiro, *Developing Evaluation Criteria to Assess the Internationalization of Universities* (pp. 6-10). Osaka: Osaka University
- Kaneko, M. (2007, June 6). Globalization: University of Tokyo open lecture series. *Higher Education in Globalizing Society* (Lectured in Japanese). Retrieved from <http://today.tv/contents-list/2006-2009FY/2007spring/13?p=1>
- Kariya, T. (2014). Japanese university reforms and the illusion of international competitiveness. *Nippon.com*. Retrieved from <https://www.nippon.com/en/in-depth/a02803/>
- Kato, S. (2012). Current Japanese language schools and their future. *JASSO Student Exchange*, 10 (19), (Published in Japanese). Retrieved from http://www.jasso.go.jp/ryugaku/related/kouryu/2012/_icsFiles/afieldfile/2015/11/19/katosanae.pdf
- Knight, J. (1994). *Internationalization: Elements and checkpoints (Research Monograph, No. 7)*. Ottawa, Canada: Canadian Bureau for International Education. Retrieved from <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED549823.pdf>
- Knight, J. (2008). *Higher Education in Turmoil*. Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.
- Kuroda K. (2016). Regionalization of higher education in Asia. In C. Collins, M. Lee, J. Hawkins, & D. Neubauer (Eds.), *The Palgrave Handbook of Asia Pacific Higher Education* (pp. 141-156). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- McCrostie, J. (2017, August 9). More Japanese may be studying abroad, but not for long. *Japan Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/community/2017/08/09/issues/japanese-may-studying-abroad-not-long/#.WieCWTdx2UI>
- MEXT. (2008). *Outline of the Student Exchange System: Study in Japan and Abroad*. Tokyo: Author. Retrieved from http://www.mext.go.jp/a_menu/koutou/ryugaku/081210/001.pdf#search=%27300000+international+students+plan+MEXT%27
- MEXT. (2016). Top Global University Project. Tokyo: Author. Retrieved from <http://www.mext.go.jp/en/policy/education/highered/title02/detail02/sdetail02/1395420.htm>
- MEXT. (2017a). Inter-University Exchange Project (Re-Inventing Japan Project). Tokyo: Author. Retrieved from <http://www.mext.go.jp/en/policy/education/highered/title02/detail02/sdetail02/1373893.htm>
- MEXT. (2017b, June 12). *Japan Updates: MEXT's Efforts towards Global Human Resource Development* (CULCON Educational-Exchange Review Committee). Tokyo: Author.
- MEXT. (2017c). *Current Status of Japanese Studying Abroad*. Tokyo: Author. (Published in Japanese). Retrieved from http://www.mext.go.jp/a_menu/koutou/ryugaku/_icsFiles/afieldfile/2017/12/27/1345878_02.pdf
- MEXT. (2017d). *Current State and Policy Measures for International Educational Exchange*. Tokyo: Author. (Published in Japanese). Retrieved from http://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/shingi/chukyo/chukyo4/043/siryo/_icsFiles/afieldfile/2017/09/26/1396556_6.pdf
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). (2004). *Internationalisation and Trade in Higher Education: Opportunities and Challenges*. Paris: Author. Retrieved from www.oecd-ilibrary.org/education/internationalisation-and-trade-in-higher-education_9789264015067-en
- Osaki, T. (2017, January 3). Experts warn Japan's language schools are becoming a front for importing cheap labor. *Japan Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2017/01/03/national/social-issues/experts-warn-japans-language-schools-are-becoming-a-front-for-importing-cheap-labor/#.WifHyDdx2Uk>
- Ota, H. (2011). University internationalization trends and Japan's challenges and prospects: an East

- Asian comparative study. *Journal of Multimedia Education Research*, 8(1), S1-S12. (Published in Japanese). Retrieved from <http://hermes-ir.lib.hit-u.ac.jp/rs/handle/10086/22242>
- Ota, H. (2012). Internationalization of universities in Japan, In D. K. Deardorff, H. D. Wit, J. D. Heyl & T. Adams (Eds.), *The SAGE Handbook of International Higher Education* (pp. 470-472). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Ota, H. (2014). Japanese universities' strategic approach to internationalization: accomplishments and challenges, In A. Yonezawa, Y. Kitamura, A. Meerman, & K. Kuroda (Eds.), *Emerging International Dimensions in East Asian Higher Education* (pp. 227-252). Heidelberg: Springer.
- Ota, H. (2015). A springboard for surmounting language barriers, *HQ 2015*. Retrieved from <http://www.hit-u.ac.jp/eng/hq/2015/index.html>
- Ota, H. (2016). Trends and issues in internationalization of higher education. *International Education*, 22, 1-9. (Published in Japanese).
- Ota, H. & Horiuchi, K. (2017). How accessible are English-taught programs? Exploring international admissions procedures, In A. Bradford & H. Brown (Eds.), *English-Medium Instruction in Japanese Higher Education* (pp.108-129). Bristol: Multilingual Matters.
- Rose, H., & McKinley, J. (2017). Japan's English-medium instruction initiatives and the globalization of higher education. *Higher Education*, 75(1), 1-19. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-017-0125-1>
- Shimmi, Y., & Yonezawa, A. (2015). Japan's "Top Global University" project, *International Higher Education*, 81, 27-28. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.6017/ihe.2015.81.8742>
- Yoshida, A. (2016). Internationalization at universities—true or false: the emptiness of "Global HR Development". *Discuss Japan-Japan Policy Forum*, 30. Retrieved from <http://www.japanpolicyforum.jp/archives/society/pt20160331064546.html>