

The Japan's Challenge of Fostering “Global Human Resources” The policy debates and practices

Akiyoshi Yonezawa, PhD
yonezawa@gsid.nagoya-u.ac.jp

Graduate School of International Development
(GSID)
Nagoya University, Japan

Features of Japan's HE

- Relatively large population (127 million)
- Relatively strong economy as a size (No 3. as to GDP after US & China)
- Concentration of public investment into limited number of national public institutions
 - Science and Technology: visible considering the disadvantage to be a non-English speaking country
 - Limited international viability in education
 - Language barrier, HE as a screening device, Tradition of in-house training and promotion esp. in a large enterprises
 - Not exactly true for science and engineering field, while most of the university researchers tend to be trained through Japanese system so far
 - High graduation rate (90%) under over supply condition

Attraction of the Talent

Japan's approaches

- Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Programme (1987-): invite Assistant Language Teachers (ALTs).
- Guideline to accept “returnees” to Japan’s schooling (1979-)
- Enable Non-Japanese faculties to get full professor professorship at national & local public universities (1982-)
- Plan to accept 100,000 international students by the end of 20th Century (1983-)
- Plan to accept 300,000 international students by 2020 (2008-)
- Technical intern and training program (1981-)
- Points-based Preferential Immigration Treatment for Highly Skilled Foreign Professionals (2012-)

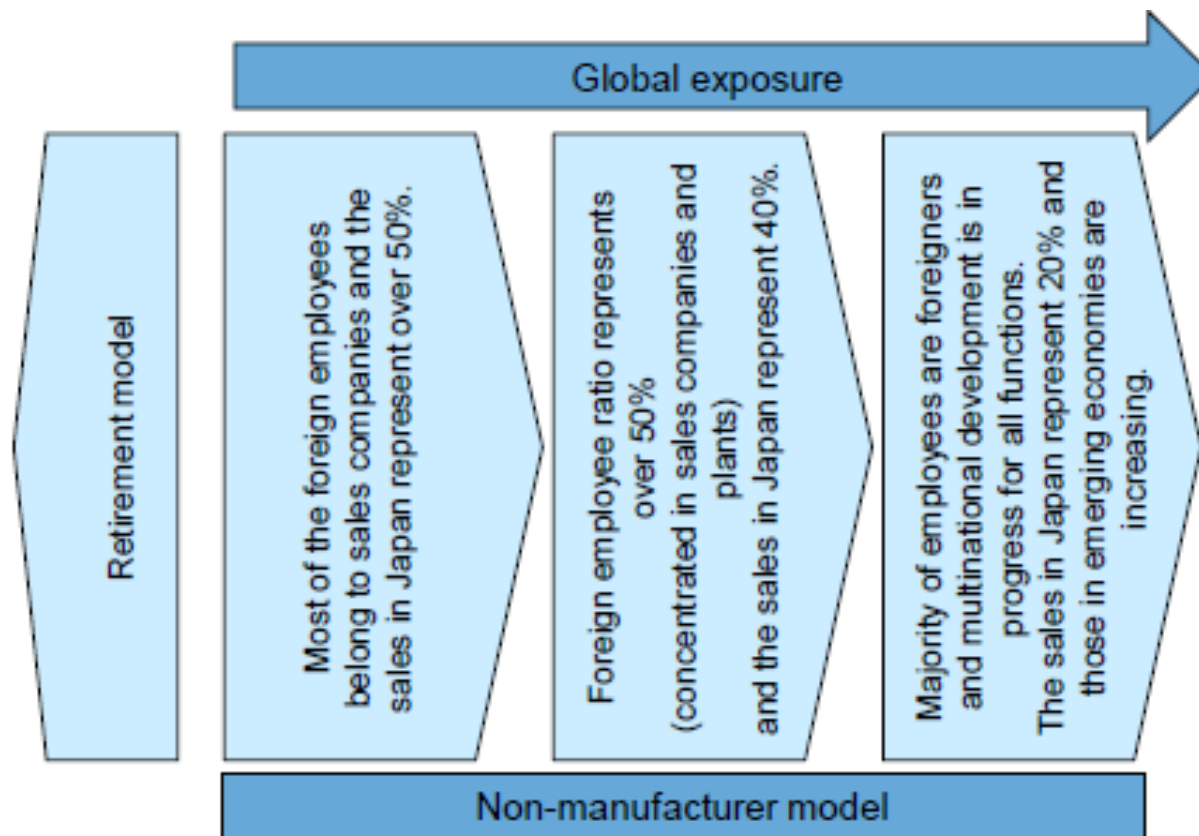
Impact of structural change in Asian and global economy

- Rapid increase of high skilled human resources at global level
- Development of huge consuming market in emerging economies

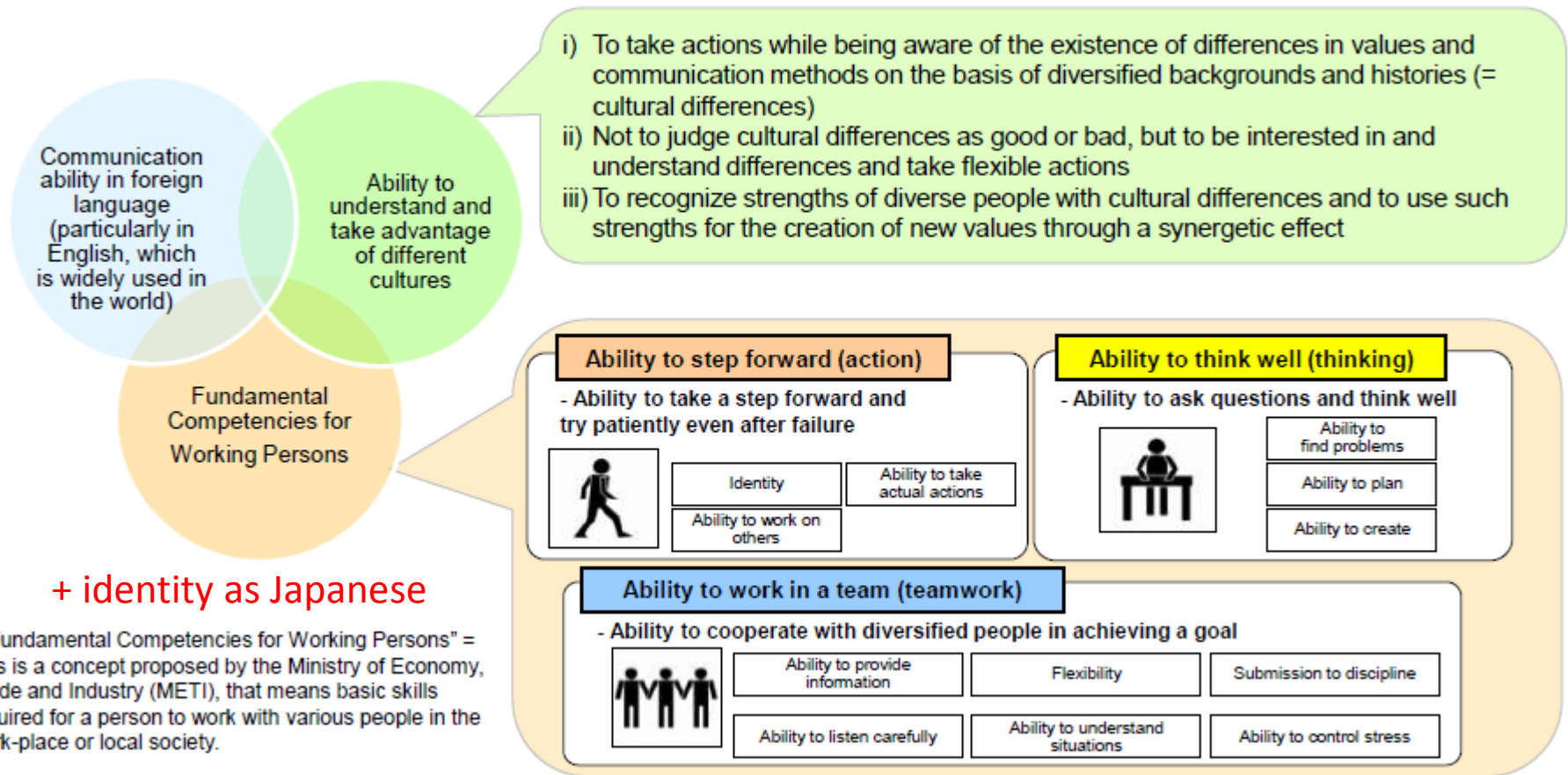


- Lack of human resources who can manage multi-nationalized Japanese enterprises
- Opportunities and risks for current Japanese students
 - Inward looking among significant share of youth (small opportunities and large risks in the long run)
 - Undeveloped career path for those who wish to work actively in a global labor market
- Increased mismatch btw demand and supply among graduates from Japanese universities under the decrease of young population

Possible scenario of globalization among Japanese enterprises (report by Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry: METI 2010)



Identification of 'global human resources' as industrial policies (METI 2010)



Polarization of the attitudes of the young workers on working abroad

Sanno Institute of Management (2013)

- Newly employed workers (18 to 26 years olds) who do not wish to work abroad has risen from 28.7% in 2004 to 58.7% in 2013.
- Majority (29.5%) of those who wish to work abroad (41.3%) responded that they are willing to work anywhere in the world

- Reasons of the positive response
 - The experiences that are not available in Japan (74.0%)
 - for widening their own perspectives (65.6%)
 - for the improvement of the language communication skills (47.7%)
 - for the opportunities to work with non-Japanese (24.2%)
- The reasons of the negative response
 - lack of confidence on language ability (65.2%)
 - uncertainty on the life in foreign countries (50.4%)
 - do not feel attracted to overseas (35.5%)
 - lack of confidence on their own work ability (27.3%)
 - additional burden to their families (18.6%)
 - uncertainty on the influence of overseas work on their career (14.1%)

Global Human Resource Development in Practices

- Industry
 - Shift of recruitment of university graduates from outside of Japan
 - Make English as an official working language
 - Provide scholarship for studying abroad
- Universities
 - Linkage and dialogues with industry and government
 - Provide programs in English to Japanese students
 - Provide support program for studying in English and abroad
 - Change of academic calendar fit to student exchange

- Government
 - Large scale short term study and visit in two ways (2011)
 - Double the number of Japanese studying abroad into 120,000 by 2020 (2013)
 - Financial support to model programs of student exchange
 - with China, South Korea (of CAMPUS Asia) and North America (2011)
 - with ASEAN countries (2012)
 - for participation to the AIMS by SEAMEO-RIHED (2013)
 - Russia and India (2014)
 - Project for Promoting Global Human Resource Development: 11 university wide programs and 31 faculty/school based programs (2012)
 - Support for vocational and professional education fit to the global economy (2013)
 - Select and support top global universities and high schools and universities (2014-)

Limitation

- The customs on the transition from university education to work are highly embedded in the respective social context, and do not change easily
- Some of Japanese students just try to take a superficial international experiences and better score on language communication tests for improving the employment opportunities
- After getting into the company, especially, the use of their competence as “Global Human Resources” is not assured under rotation based personnel policies typically seen among Japanese enterprises
- Majority of the international students are still studying in Japanese language at the undergraduate level, and seeking job opportunities somewhat related to the Japanese industry either in Japan or their home countries

Conclusion

- The nationwide campaigns and movements for fostering “Global Human Resources” certainly changed the perspectives and attitudes of universities, industries and even the students more for active in getting international experiences through university education for getting better employability in the globalized labor market.
- At the same time, this movement and actual practices are basically active within the linkage between universities and industry inside Japan.
- On the other hand, especially at the senior management level, it is becoming more likely to be involved in the working environment that requires the competences of the “Global Human Resources”.

This presentation is based on
Yonezawa, A. (2014). Japan's Challenge of Fostering "Global Human
Resources": Policy Debates and Practices. *Japan Labor Review*: 11(2). 37-
52.

http://www.jil.go.jp/english/JLR/documents/2014/JLR42_yonezawa.pdf