

The New Development of Internationalization in Japanese Higher Education

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Abstract

At present, the universities not only perform the traditional modern state's function to provide its citizens with the necessary education, but they also have taken on new roles such as assuring the quality of education and research while introducing new educational programs, all of which are based on an international university-level exchange. This article focuses on the strategic growth of "internationalization" with regard to Japanese universities, and particular attention is paid to the policies focused on international student mobility, inbound-flows such as the 300,000 International Students Plan. The article examines the policies on the admission of international students and some significant prospects of internationalization of universities in Japan, including systematic strategies for university internationalization, introducing English-taught programs, Japanese language education, dispatch of Japanese students, and introducing "gap year" system. Through these policies, the government has come to play a central role in offering subsidies for the construction of student accommodations, financial aid for government scholarship programs, support for host institutions of international students, funds for tuition reductions and exemptions, and relaxed immigration regulations.

Keywords: internationalization, university education, higher education policy, student mobility, Japan

1 Internationalization and Globalization

Generally speaking, the process of "internationalization" constitutes a leading concept in the recent reforms in higher education. Nowadays this concept is accepted and supported by virtually everyone, apart from staunch conservatives. It is not at all simple to clarify the definitions of "internationalization," "globalization" as well as their characteristics. If we attempt to sort out the meaning of "internationalization" based on the facts

found in various research papers, "internationalization" implies the move to form a functional system, in which as many students as possible are free to cross Japan's borders and study abroad, while at the same time the traditional structure of a "nation-state" is being preserved. "Internationalization" holds particularly the meaning of an attempt to achieve a consensus at an international level and to regulate the university-entrance system, the development of multilingual curricula and educational programs, the quality assurance of education and research, as well as the evaluation of academic degrees and their recognition (Knight, 2006).

With regard to "globalization", on the other hand, there is the view that it leads to the standardization of a certain quality of university education and research at an international level by means of a unified system (which is mainly an American-type system). This results from a market-oriented transformation and the advance of information technology. Consequently, there is a shift towards the pursuit of a multicultural educational environment that exceeds the existing state-education system, even if a slight one, and a shift towards mobilizing a great deal of human resources. For the acquisition of such human resources, a variety of actions and strategic policies will be developed between nations.

2 Current Trends for Accepting International Students in America, Europe and Asia

In major countries and regions, throughout the world like the US, the European Union, Australia and China, strategic policies are being set forth one after another, targeting the acquisition of superior international students. By treating international students as "customers" there are multiple benefits, such as benefits for the economy of the host-country, the promotion and application of advanced research through the acquisition of superior human capital and the establishment of friendly relations between the international students' host-country and their country of origin (Altbach, Kelly, & Lulat, 1985; Ebuchi, 1997;

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Yuriko, 2010).

In 2007, around 620,000 international students were admitted into the United States, which thus became the country with the most international students in the world. Nevertheless, if we take a look at the quality of education, we cannot say for sure that this has been a success. Starting from the debate of in what way are more excellent young researchers from all academic fields, who are capable of becoming international pioneers, invited to the US, the reconsideration of the policy measures concerning the admission of international students has become in recent years a subject of controversy. On the other hand, despite the present admission policy of international students, it is hard to say that the number of American students sent abroad is high, compared to that of other developed countries. This fact attracted criticism, thus making it necessary to plan an escape from isolation in international academic exchange. A policy offering its own students the opportunity to get in touch with various languages and cultures has drawn considerable attention in recent years. "The National Security Language Initiative" proposes the plan to dispatch a million students abroad.

With regard to Higher Education in the European Union, the Erasmus program, in which Higher Education serves as a reference point, is currently being promoted as part of the Socrates program (Hotta, 2010). Moreover, since the Bologna Declaration in 1999, the cross-national exchange of researchers and students within Europe has increased. This development has expanded to areas outside Europe through the Erasmus Mundus program. Furthermore, in 1997 the European Committee in collaboration with UNESCO concluded the "Convention on the recognition of studies, diplomas and degrees concerning Higher Education in the European region" and in 2005 the OECD set the guidelines for quality assurance of Higher Education. The attempt to set out a plan for assuring the quality of universities internationally also became visible with the advancement of states' universities and the promotion of student exchange in the region.

In various Asian and Oceania countries, policies targeting the admission of international students have been put forward in recent years through a type of economic leadership, increasing the annual number of international students admitted to these nations. (Arata, 2007; Satō, 2007; Sugimoto, 2006) In Australia, where education services have become a main export industry for Singapore, the acquisition of human resources carrying high-level expertise is being targeted for the sake of economic development in Malaysia, where a base for "transit trade" of Higher Education has been founded strategic planning that corresponds the concept of admitting international students with the ideals of each country is taking place.

Furthermore, China, which has been a major contributor to sending international students abroad, is also a destination for international students from other nations based on the concept of a form of economic leadership (Sugimura, 2011). The majority of international students admitted to China are Korean, followed by Japanese and American. In 2010, the Chinese government announced a plan to increase the number of international students up to a total of 500,000 by 2020, aiming to become the country accepting the most international students in Asia. In addition, a plan to establish the Confucius Academy in 100 places around the world is being carried out, with the objective to spread the use of the Chinese language on a global scale.

It is thought that world trends in the globalization of universities also significantly influence the future of Japanese study-abroad policy. Particularly the moves to be taken by the US, which has been major host country of international students, will attract attention in the future. It is mainly English-speaking countries that American students choose for studying abroad and the status of English as an international language in the global community is strongly relevant. In contrast, those whose mother tongue is English have already acquired English competences, and many of them will probably to choose a field in an educational institution that is not related to language acquisition. Consequently, further development of study programs conducted in English will be required in the future in order to secure students from America which could have the potential to encourage an enormous amount of English-speaking students to study abroad.

3 Making Attractive Programs for International Students

International university rankings are important guides for students to decide which school to attend. When it comes to internationalization, such global rankings are so important that they raise discussion as to what Japanese universities can do in order to increase their international competitiveness and attract international students.

In the "World University Ranking" of the 2011 edition of the British education journal *Times Higher Education*, only two Japanese universities, Tokyo University and Kyoto University, are listed within the top 100 universities, with the former coming in at 30th place and the latter at 52nd. Japanese universities are criticized for being domestically "insular" towards foreign countries. The scarcity of foreign teachers in the education faculties, the low number of international students and the lack of researchers' English communicative skills are held responsible. It is also suggested that in spite of the depth of research discourses

in Japan and the intellectual capabilities of its researchers, Japanese papers are seldom cited in the international academic journals and media. In reality the percentage of international students in bachelor/master's courses remains an average of 2.9%, whereas in OECD countries the percentage reaches 6.7% and in the 19 EU countries 5.9% (Okada, 2012a).

Because the functions of universities are diverse (whether they are, for instance, a faculty of research or education, or a faculty of liberal arts or physical sciences), such a comparison may not necessarily be valid. Nevertheless, if we take into consideration the strong influence the university ranking system exerts on the higher education institutions of all countries, it seems a matter of course that the quality of academic degrees or qualifications in Japan and its domestic universities as a whole receive low evaluation, the search for the causes as well as the corresponding solutions will become urgent. On this occasion, the following counter measures are necessary: the reconsideration of education/research content, the introduction of a Grade Point Average (GPA) system, so that a proper evaluation for students' academic performance which corresponds to the international standards can be performed, the strengthening of the structure of Faculty Development (FD), which is essential for an evaluation system based on self-assessment and for the improvement of the quality of teaching personnel, and the overhaul and expansion of the employment support system for international students. Furthermore, if structural reforms of the graduate schools' organization or their curricula are not examined from the viewpoint of international students, they are unlikely to appeal to these students. A variety of programs that correspond to individual competencies or the diversity of needs must therefore be created.

4 Policies for Internationalization in Transition: Japan's Case

The policies on the admission of international students in recent Japan are outlined in the following sections.

International student policies in Japan started in the 1950s with the admission of international students at the expense of the government. This policy aimed at "educating international students as human capital" and "encouraging friendship with Japan."

According to Ebuchi (1997), there are three "ideal models" related to the significance of accepting international students. One is the "classical model" that appeared immediately after the end of the Second World War and whose main student body was limited to the elite. This model was followed by the "co-operation and mutual understanding approach," which appeared as a

trait of the popularization of studying abroad in the 1970s and 1980s. The "model based on the economic principle" is the third model and only raised at present, when the neoliberal market principles is introduced to education (Horie, 2002; Yokota & Shirado, 2004). Besides, two new approaches have emerged (Ota, 2012). One is the "skilled migration approach" under which companies are eager to employ international students after graduating from Japanese Universities ("brain gain" from overseas). The other is called the "revenue-generating approach" under which private institutions together with commission-paid agents try aggressively to recruit international students notably from China. The traditional "co-operation and mutual understanding approach" has been weakened by the new approaches which are now dominant in international education in Japan.

5 Educational Policies in Transition

The debate on the internationalization of Japanese higher education was in full swing in 1983 after the "Proposal about the 21st century international student policy" (commonly known as the "Plan to admit 100,000 international students") was approved. In addition, in the Japan-United States Conference on Cultural and Educational Interchange (CULCON), an international student exchange model based on the principle of reciprocity and mutuality was planned and statements about the international student acceptance policy in Japan continued. Since then the "Plan to admit 100,000 international students" has served as a standard framework for promoting the admission of international students, and the government as well as several authorities had launched various sorts of related policies and measures.

Internationalization and globalization policies in Japan from the 1990s and onwards can be classified in the following categories that correspond to three perspectives: (1) policies to activate international student exchange, (2) human resources training policies that correspond to globalization and (3) policies to promote international strategic development of universities (Yoshimoto, 2012). These policies are connected to each other and continuously expanding, while reflecting aspects like political and financial requests or university reforms at times. Such policies pay particular attention to training human resources capable of surviving globalization and are therefore directed towards the realization of studies that cross borders by standardizing university education at an international level and by promoting program development, including quality assurance of education; at the same time they include aspects that are not limited in this framework, such as cooperation between senior high school and universities or

ways students can connect to a career path after graduation.

In addition, the traits of policies pursued in recent years can be classified to three distinct periods (Yoshimoto, 2012).

The first period was between 2000 and 2006, during which “an international student acceptance-centred policy” was emphasized. In the 2000 report of the Universities Inquiry Commission titled “About an ideal method of higher education in times of globalization,” it is mentioned with the objective to improve its international versatility and commonality. To better position itself in the international competition, Japanese higher education should focus on the improvement of the quality of human resources that conform to the era of globalization. In concrete terms, this indicated a course of actions such as the accomplishment of liberal arts education and the improvement in the qualifications of teaching personnel. It also showed the way to an education that stresses the importance of real experiences.

However, during that period, the development of concrete policies concerning the internationalization of university education was restricted and they were thought to have constantly remained at a conceptual-level. At that time the “Plan to admit 100,000 international students” introduced in the 1980s was still being carried out, and the expansion of the admittance-policy of international students was mainly a part of aid to developing countries. However, in the implementation of various government policies it was stressed that rather than increasing numbers, which was something easily achieved through an admission system based on “quantity”, the “quality” of the international students admitted should also be taken into consideration. Meanwhile the internationalization of education at the level of private and public universities had already started before this policy. At the Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University (founded in 2000), the Akita International University (founded in 2004), and Waseda University (founded in 2004), courses conducted in English or the awarding of corresponding academic degrees had already begun in earnest. In addition, the “University Education Internationalization Promotion Program,” introduced in 2004, supports cross-national programs for international cooperation, including agreements between universities on student exchange, credit transfer and dual degrees. Nevertheless, this has been a comparatively small-scale program.

The second period is between 2007 and 2009. During this time period, Japan adopted the policy of “A switch to accept international students” aiming to acquire highly capable human resources in contrast to the previous policy of accepting international students as a type of aid to developing countries. *The Study Group Concerning the*

Management of Global Human Resources report issued by the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry in 2007 stated that trends such as the intensification of business competition in a global scale and the appearance of Eastern Asian countries in the market have changed the environment surrounding the Japanese Economy, and it was necessary to employ foreigners possessing expertise. Therefore, the report recommended that the admission of international students be expanded. The international student acceptance policy based on the model of acquiring highly talented persons has also brought future immigration policies into focus.

In 2008, the “Plan for 300,000 international students” was announced and since then not only became the framework for the so-called “global 30” plan but formed a basis for the internationalization of universities as well (Aspinall, 2013, pp. 161-163). In view of the competition to acquire international human resources, major universities were selected in order to propel this project forward. All efforts were put into strengthening the universities’ structure aiming to internationalize university education, and developing action plans, such as a radical reform of the university administration, the formulation of courses conducted in English and the establishment of international offices, to name just a few. However, in the world university rankings Japanese universities are still lagging behind in the proportion of international students and the foreign teaching personnel they employ.

The third period extends from 2010 to the present. The main objective of the political measures taken during this period lies in the “regional exchange, international partnership and education development for human capital.” In 2010 Prime Minister Hatoyama advocated the “Campus Asia” concept in the trilateral summit conference between Japan, Korea and China, following the example of “Erasmus plan” of the EU, targets sustainable expansion of the exchange between universities of the three countries as well as student exchange through the involvement of the governments. This involvement includes a careful consideration of the framework for quality assurance of education plus an attempt to set up exchange guidelines and pilot programs. The 2011 budget approved a new short-term exchange program (short-stay, short-visit) for students. Moreover, the institutionalization of joint degrees is promoted.

Moreover, attention was also paid to the policy concerning the “development of an education for human capital.” The background included a demand for globally oriented human capital, which is considered essential within the context of international competition, a reduction of the number of Japanese students studying abroad due to their “inland-oriented disposition,” as well as the

economic recession after the Lehman-shock. Proposals asking for an education aimed at promoting global human capital were made in succession, such as in the “Sunrise report” of the Federation of Economic Organizations issued in 2010 and the summary of the “Conference for the promotion of education of global human capital” issued in 2011 (Nihon keizai dantai rengokai, 2011). The 2012 budget new projects were approved, which were related to the organization of a university system that has at its core the education of internationally-oriented human capital. These projects include at the same time the development of international strategies on the internationalization of universities while still associated with the above mentioned “global 30.”

6 Crucial Issues in Japanese Universities

Many authors have already pointed out many issues related to the internationalization of Japanese universities (Kuroda, 2012; Okada, 2012b; Sato, 2010; Suzuki, 2011).

Internationalisation has become a very important and indispensable issue in education as well as in research, and is highly esteemed in Japanese higher education. As a result of long lasting economic recession, Japan’s public debt has reached 200% of its GDP. Therefore, there is a great demand not only from society but also from taxpayers that universities show the added value of their internationalization and its impact on their institutes. The following section examines some significant prospects of internationalization of universities in Japan (Okada, 2012a).

6.1 Systematic Strategies for University Internationalization

First of all, every university and graduate school is asked to show a viable vision or the internationalization of education and research by means of accepting international students. Making use of its distinctive traits, each university will be forced to make a choice whether to reinforce its roles as a training institute for researchers, an education center for skilled professionals, or an exemplar of such fields as Japanese language, Japanese culture, etc. Furthermore, there are strategic agreements on academic exchange between universities and departments. The second strategy, which is related to the first, focuses on the introduction and development of systematic and distinctive programs and curricula with corresponding degrees and certificates upon completion, and that suits the needs of international students. Consequently, the international competition between universities will be likely to increase. Should the situation occur in the future, the ability to attract international students will impact

the management of universities so much that the demand for educational programs offered in multiple languages, started with English, will be proposed and such concepts as forming high-level intellectual grounds in East Asia capable of competing against those in the United States and the European Union will be raised. With the collaboration between Asian countries as a core element, it is necessary that those young people of the highest calibre who are considered the pillars of Japan’s future work together with their counterparts in China and Korea to take initiatives. The construction of programs that foster students’ English proficiency and get them to think in an Asian perspective is expected.

Thirdly, in order to attract international students, what is to be thought of is not only their academic needs but also the daily life problems they may encounter. In this regard, reducing frictions between different cultures, offering a safe living environment in which international students feel comfortable and thus can devote themselves to studying are the tasks universities could undertake. Collaboration between universities and communities is also essential. For example, for cultural exchange, vacant rooms in the communities can serve as “dormitories” to accommodate both Japanese and international students. Besides, regional “city development” may employ international students.

Universities too should be partly responsible for the career paths of international student. In order for outstanding international students to stay in Japan as valuable human capital, they should be given more opportunities of internships in Japanese companies, if not offered decent jobs upon graduation (Tsunematsu, 2008). Furthermore, building an alumni network and setting up information sharing systems that promote employment in international enterprises and institutions inside and outside Japan is paramount.

6.2 Introducing English-taught Programs

Fourthly, when it comes to curriculum reform, it is fair enough to say that internationalisation has been underdeveloped in Japan. The government and universities have always supported an approach in which Japan imports foreign knowledge and technology and modified them for the use of modernisation in Japan (internationalisation for modernisation). The fact that Japanese universities have followed courses of Western universities has long prevented Japanese universities from internationalising their curricula.

In some cases, international students in Japan, especially the short-term exchange students lack Japanese language competency. Many countries in the world and Japanese government as well promote “advancement of short-term exchange program (so-called short program). That is to say, increasing courses lectured in English.

Supported by these trends, Japanese national universities, since the mid-1990s, have been introducing courses that go beyond traditional frameworks, in which “International and Japanese Students (IJ) study together” (Okada, 2006). Unlike traditional classes in which international students are arranged under certain programs, “IJ co-education” is a new learning experiment through which Japanese and international students take courses delivered in English in the same classroom. This program has already been enforced in some private universities as a strategic tool for internationalisation. One striking characteristic of the classes is a teaching style which places students in the centre of the class with methods like traditional lecture, presentation, discussion, debate and so on.

However, the problems with “IJ co-education” are the inadequate English proficiency of teachers and of the Japanese students and students from non-English speaking countries, and the awkwardness the Japanese students feel in these Western style classes. Because quite a lot of international students ask classes to be taught in Japanese, problems that damage the foundation of short programs have emerged. In addition, due to the fact that clear-cut establishment of the program has not been mandated by the government at an administrative level, each university develops its own program and curriculum design is left to the teachers. Although universities have to report to the government on their program, valid evaluation reports remain rare.

As a result, the information regarding “IJ co-education” is regarded not exchange properly between national and private universities, and it follows that there is no consensus about the evaluation criteria for the program and the transfer of credits, not to mention curriculum design. At this point, supporting project for the standardization of university international classes taught in English; that is, the advancement of teachers’ ability to educate international students and the opportunities for them to learn appropriate class management are vital in the short term. The practice in the Ministry of education’s “program to promote internationalization of Japanese university education -- support for international advanced education in practice” in 2006 addresses the need to strengthen the mutual cooperation between universities (Monbukagakushō, 2006). In this project, we send teachers of different fields of study from eight universities, out of twenty-six with short programs on faculty development (FD), to studying tours in order for them to learn how to improve the quality of class management in English. At the same time, the classes on FD are filmed on VTR and shared through the entire network of 26 universities. From now on, the enforcement and development of such cooperative efforts between universities will be expected.

6.3 Japanese Language Education

In addition to international students, we have a great number of foreigners studying Japanese in Japanese language schools run by private companies and communities in Japan. In general, students funded by their families are required to have certain level of Japanese proficiency to be accepted by Japanese universities as international students, and they have to take Japanese proficiency tests or exams for studying in Japan. However, such exams are given only once or twice a year and mostly students cannot take the exams in their own country. Instead, they have to fly all the way to Japan for the exams, which is financially ineffective.

In 2010, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology revealed the wrap up of “discussions on Japanese Language Education for international students” and proposed concrete approaches on inclusive and systematic Education for all stages of students’ life, which means providing students with education before coming to Japan, at college, after graduation, during job hunting and so on, in order for universities to acquire international students with competence. Moreover, they are examining how to keep the high quality of education at Japanese language teaching institutions before international students move on to higher education (Monbukagakushō, 2010).

Unfortunately, the Great East Japan Earthquake which hit the North-eastern parts of Japan on March 11, 2011 and the following accident at Fukushima first nuclear power plant discouraged international students from studying in Japan. According to the Japanese Institution for Students’ Support, as of May 2011, the number of international students studying in Japan was 138,075, a decrease of 3,699 from the previous year. Only 7,836 visas were issued in October 2011 that meant a reduction of 4,000 visas compared with 11,725 visas issued in the same month of the previous year. This indicates the drastic decrease in the number of Korean and Chinese students, and Japanese language schools in the Tohoku region lost 80% of their students.

When we take into account that nearly 70% of international students who plan to study at Japanese Universities have studied at Japanese language schools at some point of their stay, the overall system of accepting international students will certainly be affected hereafter. For that reason, Japanese universities, government ministries and private Japanese language schools should discuss together how Japanese language education can be improved to attract more students.

6.4 Dispatch of Japanese Students

Various media have reported that recently the

number of Japanese students going abroad to study has decreased and they've had a tendency to be more and more domestically minded. According to the survey conducted by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, the number of students who went abroad to study has been decreasing for 5 consecutive years, reaching 59,923 in 2009, which is 6,910 fewer than the previous year. Compared to 2004, which boasted with the largest number of students going abroad to study, 2009 represented a decrease of about 23,000 (28%). Moreover, the number of students studying at the most prestigious universities in the world, namely Harvard University, keeps decreasing while the number of students at these schools from China, India and Singapore has doubled (Asahi Newspaper, digital 2001/01/29: http://www.asahi.com/?ref=com_gnavi).

The decrease can possibly be explained by the long lasting economic recession. Students have started job hunting earlier and there is a trend toward getting a secure job and resisting the idea of working abroad. In addition, the development of IT innovation enables students to access knowledge easily without studying at universities.

Some researchers are critical about a theory, which finds students' domestic inclination to be ingrained in their perspective. For instance, external factors, like job hunting which starts too early are depriving students from having college education and from studying abroad. Another reason could be the increase of the number of students shifting to Asian Universities from prestigious American or European Universities, at which Japanese students used to attend. Consequently we can conclude that Japanese students do not always tend to be domestic. However, as far as the sum of the Japanese students studying at universities, junior colleges and technical colleges (3,780,000 as of 2005) is concerned, we soon realize how small the number of students studying abroad, 60,000 in total, really is. The difference between sexes in the type of studying abroad will be an agenda to be discussed hereafter (Yonezawa, 2009).

Under such circumstances, governments and communities are trying to support students who are willing to study abroad. Universities are making an attempt to establish a system for Japanese students, which supports them before and after they leave Japan (Takahama & Tanaka, 2011). In 2008, the Ministry of Education Science Report stated that the Japanese government would strengthen the policies to send Japanese students abroad as one of the main pillars for the internationalization of universities. The 2014 budget plan includes a 1.6% increase in the scholarship about 3.1 billion yen for students to study abroad, and the number of eligible students increased 1.2 times. Moreover, another 5 billion yen was distributed to the improvement of university education with the purpose of developing students' ability to write theses and to

communicate in foreign languages. Other than these steps, the government has also developed a policy to increase the number of high school students studying abroad and develop a supporting fund of 120 million yen for 300 high school students. Furthermore, the Tokyo Board of Education made a plan to send about 3,000 students abroad by 2020, and they aim to send 150 students from public schools, using money partially footed by the government (about 190 million yen).

6.5 Introducing "Gap Year" System

Recently, leading newspapers have reported that Tokyo University is planning to introduce fall matriculation, which has already been an international standard adopted in most countries, notably America and Europe. This move will promote communication with international students and internationalization. Since the dates of entrance examinations held at universities will not be changed, this shift will introduce Gap Year or Gap Term which starts from the time of passing the entrance examination and ends at the time students actually begin studying at universities. Generally speaking, the Gap Year is defined as a period of time beginning at the point of the graduation from high school until the start of university term, when an individual student is free to join some kind of activity in order to establish his or her future career based on his or her interests. President Junichi Hamada stated that by introducing fall matriculation and the Gap Year he was thinking to give more opportunities for exchange between students of Tokyo university and international students, to undertake ELS in and out of Japan, to increase volunteer and welfare activities, and also to have work experiences (Embodiment Learning) like working as an intern. He is calling for the prevalence of Gap Year all over Japan. Furthermore, the Federation of Economic Organization announced a "proposal on encouraging global talents," showing attitude to appraise the introduction of Gap Year to grow students who will be able to live through in the time of globalization.

However, some people wonder if it is really effective for the internationalization of Japanese universities to introduce fall matriculation. Some have argued that universities will not be able to secure a place in international studying milieu even if classes for international students began at Japanese universities in September, since Japanese universities still have such problems as the shortage of teachers who can give lectures in English, teachers' poor levels of English proficiency, and a continued reliance on old fashioned lecturing style. In addition, other leading universities have a reluctant attitude toward the Gap Year. The reason why they are reluctant is that they are concerned about the increased financial burden

on high school graduates if they study abroad and about the emerging disparity in their activities, which depend on the socio-economic statuses of their families. Moreover, when we consider job hunting in Japan, many students are taught to think that the Gap Year, from 6 months to a year, would cause disadvantage for them as long as companies keep their traditional employment system in which they only employ new graduates. Other than this, there is a trend to find the earlier introduction of Gap Year dangerous on the grounds that students are unable to continue taking effective language education as soon as they graduate from high schools, and that local small universities will lose students to those whose term begins in spring, if all the universities do not introduce Gap Year at the same time.

According to Hata (2009), the Gap Year system has already been introduced in England. They recognize that the potential for students to gain various skills has increased, which encourages them to grow up through Gap Year. In addition, students "motivation has risen, their dropout rates have decreased, and after all Gap Year was found to promote students" likelihood to secure degrees or other qualification. Consequently, a big number of institutions support the Gap Year in England. In order to introduce fall matriculation and the Gap Year, it is necessary that not only universities but also the government, bureaucracies and companies together should make an effort to reform radically the present employment system and educational environment while taking the issues pointed out above into consideration.

7 Conclusion

In conclusion, the propensity toward market principle and internationalization caused by globalization has characterised policies of Japanese higher education these days. Policies on education for international students, in particular, have strongly conformed to those principles since the beginning of expansion policy in 1980s. Various policies which were promoted rapidly in a stream of neo-liberalistic "structural reform" accelerated the trend after 2000. Moves different from those in the past, which include the enrichment of programmes in English, the selection of universities accepting "global 30," the introduction of dual degree system, and the set-up of programmes planned by industries, universities and bureaucracies in cooperation, have emerged in the field of internationalization of universities. The introduction of the fall matriculation system and Gap Year are the by-products of such trends.

Facing the demands from the twenty-first century's global knowledge-based society, the Japanese government has to keep on supporting strategic initiatives for internationalization of universities to serve as catalysts

for the functional transformation of Japanese universities. Consequently, the government should provide competitive funds for pioneering internationalisation efforts and innovative international collaborations of institutions in education, research, and administration. In addition, the government should implement further deregulations, together with effective quality assurance programs in Japanese higher education as a whole.

In other words, the establishment of institutional strategies for internationalisation, and the international validity and competitiveness in education and research have recently been emphasised in Japanese discourse. In such an environment, it is important for every institution to re-examine the methods and goals in internationalisation, to look back the present state and to look for relevant "criteria" and "indicators" of its own (qualitative and quantitative), which are expected to lead to a great deal of improvement in academic quality.

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