

came an objective process in the modern higher education context. The third period became an opportunity to define internationalization and recognize its value for the development of the global knowledge economy, to compare and compete, to race for internationalization numbers, and to make successful (and less successful) attempts at modeling and managing the process of internationalization within a university or a national system.

RECENT INITIATIVES, CHALLENGES, AND OPPORTUNITIES

Currently, and looking to the future, Russian higher education internationalization is full of challenges, contradictions, and promising approaches and perspectives. Its principal focus is threefold: the education of talented young people, educational export, and international rankings. At the moment the main instrument for the education of talented young people is the Global Education Program, which started in 2014 and allows at least 1,500 applicants to receive sponsorship for studying at the master's or PhD level in the world's top-ranked universities. The export of educational services is carried out according to the Education Export Concept, a Russian Federation project for the period 2011–2020, and includes not only teaching non-resident students outside Russia, but also attracting more international students to study in Russian universities through more effective recruiting strategies, modernizing university infrastructure, teaching in English, developing massive open online courses, etc. Improving the Russian higher education reputation is part of the Project 5–100, a new project aimed at maximizing the competitive position of a group of leading Russian higher education institutions in the global research and education market. According to Quacquarelli Symonds, over the 2014–2015 academic year, the universities participating in Project 5–100 significantly improved their positions in international rankings in 36 subject areas, which can be considered as the basis for moving at least five Russian universities into the top-100 world universities list by 2020.

At the same time the key task that Russian higher education institutions have to fulfill nowadays is to make internationalization a fundamental basis for every significant part of their activity that requires an international approach. In other words, there should be a clear understanding of the importance of creating comprehensive internationalization processes, policies, and strategies within each university. With the main purpose of spreading the internationalization process throughout the overall system of higher education, the internationalization of the curriculum and learning outcomes should be added to the Russian higher education development strategy to engage all students, faculty members, and administrators in the process of interna-

tionalization, and provide them with suitable instruments to learn how to study, live, and work effectively in a globalized era. ■

Changing Trends in Japanese Students Studying Abroad

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The Japanese government has long valued international student mobility, viewing international students as prime players in its strategy for higher education internationalization, and positioning them at the center of many government-led initiatives. However, in recent years, following a dramatic decline in the number of Japanese students studying abroad and significant media focus on the inward-looking tendencies of Japanese youth, much government and higher education institution attention has turned toward outward mobility. Initiatives to increase the numbers of Japanese students overseas have begun in earnest, and, perhaps as a result, the past two years have shown an uptick in the number of Japanese students venturing abroad for academic study.

THE INWARD-LOOKING ISSUE

According to data compiled by the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (MEXT), the number of Japanese students studying abroad at higher education institutions hit a high of 82,945 in 2004. By 2010 the number had fallen to 58,010 and by 2011, the number of Japanese students overseas had declined further, reaching a low of 57,501. Around 2010, media reports, which proclaimed that Japanese students have a “Fear of Studying Abroad” and “hinder [the] nation’s economic growth,” became regular. These reports were bolstered by a widely reported survey conducted by the Sanno Institute of Management in 2010, which found that nearly half of the new employees at companies in Japan did not want to work overseas. Japanese students gained the reputation that they were narrow-minded and inward-looking, and not interested in overseas study.

Much of the discourse emphasizing the introverted nature of young Japanese could be a result of an over-reliance on the data pertaining to the number of Japanese students studying in the United States. Indeed, the number of Japanese students studying in the United States declined much more rapidly than did the number of students studying in other countries. Between 2004 and 2011, the number of Japanese students in the United States dropped by 53 percent. However, there were significant increases in the number of students studying in Latin America (600 percent), the Middle East (200 percent), and Asia (41 percent). These figures show shifting patterns of student mobility and indicate changes in the areas of interest for students. They also suggest a Japanese student body open to new international experiences.

The overall decline in the number of tertiary students studying abroad masks other promising trends in Japanese international education. Push factors that might have once driven Japanese students overseas to seek long-term education abroad have decreased. A much more international educational experience is now available *within* Japan. There is increasing diversity in Japan, both in terms of the people living and studying within its borders and in terms of the types of higher education available. For example, more higher education institutions provide an internationally focused curriculum, and many teach courses through the medium of English. Students participating in these models of higher education are much more likely to study abroad on short-term programs, and consequently may participate in modes of overseas study that are not captured in national outbound student numbers.

Analyses of data and research reports have largely concluded that the decline in the number of students studying overseas was not the result of the students' outlook, but the result of various obstacles that simply do not incentivize study abroad. Failure of the education system to prepare students for overseas study; economic stagnation; excess enrollment capacity of Japanese higher education institutions; institutional constraints related to the academic calendar and transferring in credits earned overseas; and the hiring practices and preferences of Japanese companies, which do not advantage significant overseas experience—all of these factors have been cited as reasons for the decline in Japanese students abroad. Japanese students simply weigh the opportunities and risks of overseas study and many favor the conventional route to domestic employment.

The decreasing size of Japan's youth cohort is also often cited as a reason for the decline in the number of Japanese students overseas. However, this argument is not particularly valid when one consults university enrollment data. Despite a 20 percent drop in the total number of 18-year-olds in the general population, there has been an increase

in the number of new entrants enrolling in four-year universities, and the total number of university students rose by 5 percent between 2000 and 2010.

JAPANESE STUDENT SENTIMENT

Studies examining Japanese perspectives toward study abroad have found university students to be more positively inclined toward overseas study than popular media analysis might suggest, with students desiring intercultural experiences, improved English language abilities, and global perspectives. A recent nationally representative study of 2,004 students and new graduates conducted by the British Council found that 45 percent would like to, or have already participated in, a period of overseas study. This suggests Japanese students maybe be more favorably inclined toward study abroad than students from the United Kingdom (37 percent) or the United States (44 percent). The report concludes that student concerns about overseas study are not due to a cultural mind-set that is exclusive to Japan.

RECENT POLICY

The rhetoric focused on inward-looking students has, however, served as a useful tool for reinvigorating policy discussion about international student mobility. The concept has been appropriated by MEXT and other government bodies and has kick-started the implementation of initiatives designed to internationalize Japan's education system. Government funding for outbound mobility increased in 2012, and new initiatives that include collaborative mobility programs, joint degrees, credit transfer mechanisms, and scholarships for study abroad have been launched. In 2013, the Japan Revitalization Strategy announced a government target of doubling the number of students studying abroad to 120,000 by 2020. These initiatives recognize student interest and aim to reinvigorate outward mobility by removing some of the obstacles students face when deciding to venture overseas. It is too early to fully assess the outcomes of programs such as the "Reinventing Japan" project (2011), the "Tobitate!" (Leap for Tomorrow!) study abroad campaign (2013), and the TeamUp campaign (2015). Yet, the recent upturn in the number of students studying overseas indicates a promising trend. MEXT reported 60,138 Japanese nationals studying abroad in the academic year 2012–2013, and, the using a different dataset, Japan Student Services Organization figures for 2013–2014 indicate a continuing increase. ■