

# QUANTIFYING THE INFLUENCE OF GLOBALISATION ON THE INTERNATIONALISATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN JAPAN

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## Abstract

This paper investigates the extent of globalisation's influence on the internationalisation of higher education in Japan. As a background to the study, Sklair's (1999) 'global capitalist' model of globalisation is selected to explain the powerful forces that typically impact internationalisation processes around the world. Nominating Japan as a case study, the author argues that pressures which are mainly unrelated to globalisation, such as Japan's relatively unique national characteristics, regional economic influences, and national aspirations to improve academic prestige and regional competitiveness, are primarily responsible for shaping the internationalisation of higher education. Moreover, Japan's internationalisation efforts are in their infancy, mainly government-led, and can only be vaguely connected to globalisation. The study concludes that there is insufficient evidence to directly link globalisation, particularly global

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capitalism, to the recently started and overall small-scale nature of internationalisation activities occurring in Japan's higher education today.

### <日本語訳>

この論文では、日本の高等教育の国際化にグローバル化が果たした影響の程度を調査する。研究の背景として Sklair (1999 年) の「グローバル資本主義モデル」の概念が世界中のプロセスに典型的に影響を与える強力を説明するために選択されている。ケーススタディとして日本を取り上げ、著者は次の点を主張する——日本の比較的ユニークな国民的特性地域的な経済面で影響、学問上の presteege や地域の競争力を向上させるための国民的熱意などの、グローバル化とはあまり関係ない圧力が、高等教育の国際化を形作る上で主要な原因となっている。さらに、日本の国際化への取り組みは、まだ始まったばかりで、主に政府主導のものであり、グローバル化とは曖昧に接続することができるにすぎない。グローバル化（特にグローバル資本主義）を今日の日本の高等教育で生じている、最近始まったばかりの全体的に小規模な性質の国際化活動と直接関係づけるには証拠が不十分である、とこの調査は結論づける。

## Introduction

Globalisation and internationalisation are closely linked to each other, but the latter is increasingly affected by the forces of economic globalisation (Welch 2011, p. 13). The emergence of an integrated and global economy, together with a growing emphasis on the knowledge economy; rapidly improving information and communication technology; and increasing mobility for students, academics, programmes and faculties are all factors that combine to propel the internationalisation of education (Altbach and Knight 2007, pp. 302–3). Clearly internationalisation has become the primary response of

higher education to the enormous influence exerted by the forces of globalisation (Altbach et al. 2009, p. 35).

However, there are inherent contradictions and tensions within and between the two forces of globalisation and internationalisation that are shaping higher education today. For example, opportunistic commercialisation, entrepreneurship, marketisation and the commodification of education as a business are increasingly the defining features of contemporary higher educational institutions in several OECD countries, such as Australia, where globalisation is exerting an almost overwhelming influence on attempts at internationalisation (Turner 2014, p. 8). Yet such a business-driven approach to internationalisation may not be typical of all developed nations in the Asia-Pacific region. This paper nominates Japan as a case study, arguing that, in sharp contrast with the Australian experience, forces which are mainly unrelated to globalisation have to a large extent shaped the internationalisation of higher education in Japan since the 1990s.

The study begins with an examination of the nebulous and contested meanings of globalisation and internationalisation, and the influence of global capitalism on higher education reforms. Then the two competing concepts are explored from a distinctively Japanese perspective. Following this is a description of Japan's higher education system and a consideration of some distinctive national characteristics that are shaping Japan's internationalisation. After this, several specific pressures on Japan's higher education are outlined, as well as government reforms of the system. In the final section, the overall picture of internationalisation in Japan is considered by analysing the key educational components of international student mobility, academic staff, and programmes and curricula. The study concludes with a description of the government's past and

present policies for internationalisation of higher education.

## **Conceptualising Globalisation & Internationalisation**

To understand the complex relationship between internationalisation and globalisation, it is first necessary to clearly distinguish the characteristics of each phenomenon. On the one hand, internationalisation in higher education is a general term for a wide range of practical activities involving teaching, learning and research which occur by crossing national borders and also locally in cooperation with international partners and students (Kelm & Teichler 2007, p. 261). This pragmatic view of internationalisation involves processes and practices of “integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of higher education in the institutional and national levels” (Knight 2008, p. 21). However, internationalisation also comprises a philosophical dimension.

Internationalisation is a process that is founded on international relations, incorporating ideals to promote peace, harmony and understanding between nations through an educational philosophy of individual moral development and responsible citizenship (Cambridge and Thompson 2004, p. 173). In order to achieve the goals of international cooperation and mutually shared understanding of the common good, the essential requirements are respect for cultural difference, social justice, and mutual respect within and among nations (Welch 2002, p. 434). To help fulfil these requirements, intercultural friendships and reciprocal cultural relationships within higher education institutions’ internationalisation programmes should endeavour to integrate international students and local students in non-commercial activities (Welch 2002, p. 439).

On the other hand, globalisation is a multi-dimensional process that can

impact on countries in very different ways, economically, politically, culturally, and educationally, with both positive and negative consequences. However, its key feature is its global reach and rapid movement that is not confined by national borders (Knight 2008, p. 4–5). This means that the forces and pressures of globalisation cause national borders to be eliminated so that global flows are not restricted.

Globalisation is further distinguished from internationalisation by its strong emphasis on competition (Kelm & Teichler 2007, p. 261), in particular economic competition. For example, globalisation pressures on Australian higher education are believed to be responsible for “commercialisation within international programmes and activities, particularly evidence of what has been called academic capitalism, commodification, and marketisation” (Welch 2002, p. 439).

Leslie Sklair (1999) has proposed four ‘competing conceptions of globalisation’, comprising the world–systems approach, global culture approach, global society approach, and global capitalism approach. Of these four approaches to understanding globalisation, ‘global capitalism’ seems to be the model that is most clearly related to the processes of internationalisation of higher education in industrialised, developed countries. Global capitalism “locates the dominant global forces in the structures of an ever–more globalising capitalism” (Sklair 1999, p. 156), in a system where free markets and global consumerism, involving the expert marketing of ‘brand’ products, has produced a highly lucrative business for multinational corporations (MNCs) headed by an elite “transnational capitalist class” (ibid., p.157). The impact of global capitalism on education is considered next.

## **Global Capitalism & Educational Reforms**

Sklair (2001) argues “the major factor affecting universities has been the economic ideology of globalisation that calls for the primacy of the market” (Sklair 2001 in Currie 2005, p. 1). An example of global capitalism’s impact on higher education institutions (HEIs) has been through financial-driven reforms that are intended to reduce government expenditure on education. These ‘efficiency’ reforms are implemented by, for example, privatising educational delivery, decentralising the management and financing of HEIs, and increasing marketisation of education (Carnoy, 1998, pp. 25–6). Such practices have their origins in the ideology of neoliberalism and neoliberal economics (also known as economic rationalism), which insists on limited governance in a capitalist market.

Neoliberal-induced reforms in higher education have been characteristic of all capitalistic societies, including Japan, since the 1980s. The consequences have been a continuing decline in government funding while HEIs are simultaneously being pressed to extract greater ‘efficiency’ from limited resources. Moreover, in response to increasing global competitiveness, there has been a growing emphasis on performance standards and academic quality checks that require “accreditation, cyclical reviews, and external evaluation by peers, inspection audits, benchmarking, and research assessments” (Robertson, 2012, p. 241), a process that increasingly intrudes on the working lives and careers of university academics. These efficiency reforms have paralleled efforts by many HEIs to secure alternative sources of income to substitute reduced government funding.

## Japanese Concepts of Globalisation and Internationalisation

Japanese tend to define globalisation (*gurobaruka*) as an external process over which Japan has little or no control, but it demands Japan's passive compliance. For example, Iwabuchi (2005) asserts that "as the term 'global standard' exemplifies, Japanese discourses of globalization have most notably revolved around the necessity for Japan to readjust itself to the new US-led global economic order" (Iwabuchi 2005, 104). According to this perspective, globalisation is a pressure, corresponding fairly closely to the Western meaning of "a growing interconnectedness, unprecedented in its intensity" (Burgess et al. 2010, p. 464).

On the other hand, the Japanese concept of internationalisation (*kokusaika*) is about promoting Japan to the international community, while not becoming part of it. Hashimoto (2013) explains :

This form of internationalization also requires a view that Japan should remain a monolingual state in order to stand as a unified entity against the rest of the world (Hashimoto, 2013, p. 29).

In this way, internationalisation in the Japanese context has been used to refer to a nationalistic discourse, in what has been variously described as a "closing in" (Burgess et al. 2010, p. 461); a "convergence to predetermined norms rather than divergence towards cultural and linguistic multiplicity" (Kubota 2002, p. 14); and a defence of Japanese identity and culture based on a world view of 'we Japanese' versus 'outsiders'. Therefore, so-called internationalisation projects in Japan may be regarded as nationalistic activities in other contexts. This then leads one to speculate that the Japanese may fear a loss of

their cultural identity to global culture or a loss of their intellectual autonomy to the English language and the powerful Anglophone nations.

In a similar vein, *Education in Japan* (2013) argues that the Japanese process of internationalisation is actually a form of resistance to the cultural homogenising forces of globalisation, and that internationalisation simultaneously serves to reaffirm the distinct cultural identity of Japan. Hence, English language is taught in a de-contextualised way in order to protect Japanese values, traditions, and cultural independence (*Education in Japan* 2013, p. 5). Overall, the Japanese understanding of internationalisation seems distorted and somewhat xenophobic from a Western perspective. Nevertheless, the Japanese idea of internationalisation activities providing a way to deal with globalisation shares some common ground with the Western notion of internationalisation as a strategy for institutions to “... respond to the many demands placed upon them by globalisation and as a way for higher education to prepare individuals for engagement in a globalised world” (Altbach et al. 2009, p. 23).

## **Japan’s Higher Education Structure and Funding**

Japan’s first universities were established much later than European ones, dating from the time of the Meiji Revolution in 1868 when it became open to Western ideas of education and technology (Goodman 2010, p. 68). By the mid-1970s, Japan achieved almost 100 per cent participation in senior secondary schools and about 40 per cent participation in higher education. Today, Japan’s higher education system comprises several types of institutions: four-year universities (*daigaku*); two-year junior colleges (*tanki daigaku*); colleges of technology (*kousen*); and professional training colleges (*senmon gakkou*). Universities are further divided into national, public and private, with national



universities considered to be academically superior to the others.

Table 1 shows that over 90 per cent of junior colleges and training colleges are private institutions, and that only about 22 per cent of universities (176 out of 782) are government (national or public) managed. This means that around 80 per cent of undergraduates are enrolled in private universities in Japan. The total number of students participating in higher education in 2013 was 3,176,978, and around 90 per cent of these were four-year university students (Semba 2014, p. 3).

Japan has the lowest level of public spending on higher education as a proportion of GDP of any OECD nation. In fact, Japan contributes only 0.5 per cent of GDP to its HEIs, which is less than half the average figure (1.1 per cent) spent by 30 other OECD nations that were surveyed (Amano 2014, p. 8). Whereas Japan's national universities obtain around 55 per cent of their income from government funds, private institutions receive only about 10 per cent, a sharp decline from almost 30 per cent government funding they received in the early 1970s (Goodman 2010, pp. 68–9). In addition, the top fifteen HEIs (out of more than 1,140 four-year or two-year HEIs) receive half of all the govern-

Table 1. Number of HEIs in Japan (As of May, 2013).

Category	Total Institutions	Universities	Junior Colleges	Colleges of Technology	Pro. Training Colleges
Total	4,010	782	359	57	2,812
National	147	86	0	51	10
Public	305	90	19	3	193
Private	3,558	606	340	3	2,609

(Semba 2014, p. 3).

ment research grants. Private universities, however, though comprising around 80 per cent of all HEIs, receive only about 13 per cent of government grants for research (Goodman 2010, p. 77).

### **Characteristics of Japan Vis-à-vis Internationalisation**

Though the uniqueness argument has been used almost ad nauseam to explain Japanese society to Western audiences, there appears to be some justification for using it to describe the internationalisation of Japan's HEIs. To start with, and as discussed above, the Japanese have a significantly different understanding of internationalisation to what is generally accepted in Western academic literature. Also, internationalisation should be considered in relation to globalisation, in particular global capitalism, as the two forces are closely related (see above). However, according to Kurimoto (1997, pp. 84), globalisation has not affected the daily life of Japanese people to the same extent as it has impacted the lives of people in Europe and the United States.

In seeking to ascertain the extent of globalising influences on internationalisation in Japan, it is relevant to consider the country's physical, economic, demographic and linguistic characteristics. For example, Japan is an island-nation containing a relatively large population (127 million in 2014) of highly educated people. It is arguably the most ethnically homogeneous culture on earth, comprising less than 1 per cent non-Japanese residents (Yonezawa 2003, p. 145). Japan is also an incredibly wealthy country, ranked the third largest economy in the world, and has been relatively financially insulated from the worst effects of the global financial crisis (GFC) of 2008. Since the end of WWII, Japan has been the only Japanese-speaking nation in the world, with a national literacy rate of close to 100 per cent. However, very few Japanese are proficient

in English language even though they all study it for at least six years.

The foregoing factors, acting separately or in tandem, appear to be responsible for restricting or limiting the extent of influence from external pressures and global forces on Japan's HEIs. In particular, it is argued by Yonezawa and Shimmi (2015) that two of these, Japan's strong economy and relatively large population, "... have protected the absolute majority of national university faculty and students from direct exposure to global competition" (Yonezawa and Shimmi 2015, p. 6). However, though direct influences of globalisation on Japan's HEIs may have been negligible, there have been a range of other factors exerting pressures, some of which might be partially linked to globalisation. Several of these pressures are examined in the following.

## **Pressures on Japanese Higher Education**

The main pressures that have contributed to the internationalisation of Japan's HEIs are summarised in the following.

### ***Economic pressures***

Japan's 'economic miracle' and high growth period ended in the early 1990s as the economy went into recession. Unemployment began to steadily rise as numerous businesses failed and faith in the economy dissipated. Also, as corrupt practices among officials controlling the economy came to light, faith in the whole economic system was further badly shaken. People began to question the ability of bureaucrats at the Ministry of Finance to manage the economy, as well as the education system that had trained them (Andressen 2002, pp. 181–2).

Following Japan's huge economic downturn was a period of austerity and

cost-cutting by government and businesses, including increasing requirements for greater ‘efficiency’ and ‘productivity’ in higher education (Goodman 2010, p. 70). This situation coincided with a growing realisation of the need to substantially increase national labour productivity and the related necessity to invest in education and research. However, the financial resources for achieving these goals would further strain the public purse (Newby et al. 2009, pp. 10–11). Moreover, adding to the squeeze on the national economy was another factor that was also beginning to have a major impact on Japan’s HEIs, namely demographic pressures.

### ***Demographic pressures***

Like many developed nation of the world, Japan has an ageing population and a declining birth rate. Because of these demographic pressures, one of the largest problems for Japan’s HEIs has been the declining number of new enrolments and structural difficulties preventing much increase in student numbers. Goodman (2010) explains :

The bursting of the Japanese economic bubble [in the early 1990s] coincided almost exactly with the peak of the number of 18-year olds in the Japanese population. This generation, the second post-war baby boom, peaked at 2.05 million in 1992 and then began a steady decline in numbers to around 1.41 million in 2004 (a decline of ... 31.2 per cent). The effects of this demographic shift on higher education have been dramatic, especially on lower-level and newer institutions (Goodman 2010, p. 70–71).

Consequently, many private universities can no longer rely on income from stu-

dent fees nor government financial support and are under increasing pressure to find alternative ways to substitute declining income. This is a serious social problem because private universities comprise around 80 per cent of all HEIs in Japan. However, it is made worse by a number of other related factors described in the following.

1. The higher education system has a very high participation rate of 75 per cent, which means there is almost no room for any increase of participation.
2. Japan has a very low rate of immigration and thus little demand for higher education among newly arrived residents.
3. A comparatively small number of foreign students (see below) come to Japan, mainly because there is little worldwide demand for education in Japanese language and Japan's supply of higher education in English is limited. As Yonezawa (2014, p. 50) explains: "Japanese universities and higher education institutions do not assure the knowledge, skills, and competencies that are universally viable in the global labour market, especially those in the English-speaking world." As a result of this deficiency, there is a high dependence on students from mainland China because their language is somewhat similar to Japanese.
4. There is little demand for adult education (or lifelong education) because of the seniority-based employment system which discourages retraining at mid-career. Compared to other developed countries, Japan has remarkably few mature-age students in higher education because universities concentrate on selecting students based on entrance

exams taken almost exclusively by recent high school graduates. Consequently, Japan's universities continue to be populated overwhelmingly by young people. Moreover, there are relatively few university graduate schools and these are closed off to mature-age students (Amano 2014, p. 7).

5. The system of part-time education is undeveloped, mainly because of low demand resulting from the preference of Japanese companies to train employees in-house rather than rely on external organisations (Goodman 2010, pp. 71 – 2).

### ***Political pressures***

To stimulate Japan's faltering economy, deregulation of the economy and businesses was embarked on by the government. Consequently, the number of four-year universities in Japan increased by 31 per cent between 1992 and 2004 as a growing number of businesses entered the higher education sector (Goodman 2010, p. 69 – 70).

Accompanying growing calls for deregulation was an increasing interest in how public money was being spent, including the value of returns on investment in higher education. This heightened public interest was linked to the publishing of international league tables of universities, which reflected poorly on Japan. Goodman (2010) explains :

In the QS/THE 2005 List of Top 20 Universities, there were only nine from Japan (of which only three were in the top ninety), while Anglophone countries such as the United States had nine in the top fourteen ... and Australia nine in the top eighty (and five in the top forty) (Goodman 2010,

p. 70).

By the late 2000s, Japan's international ranking had only slightly improved. This suggested to many people in Japan that something was wrong with the country's higher education system, despite the huge financial investment made by government and family households (Goodman 2010, p. 70). However, Altbach et al. (2009) claim the international rankings give preference to universities that use English as the main language of instruction and research. Also, the rankings have methodological problems but are widely used and influential (p. 5). Nevertheless, Japan's relatively poor showing in international rankings caused a sense of national crisis about the state of the nation's higher education (Goodman 2010, p. 84). The response by the government to this public concern is considered next.

### **Government Reforms of Higher Education**

In 2004, confronting a deepening economic recession and responding to mounting concerns about the quality of higher education, the government through MEXT (Ministry of Education, Sports, Science and Technology) implemented comprehensive changes, known as the 'Big Bang' reforms to deregulate and partially privatise Japan's national and local public universities, turning them into independent corporations.

Newby et al. (2009) assert that these changes were "a necessary but not sufficient condition for the Japanese tertiary system to become internationally competitive." They also claim the purpose of the reforms was to "knock the national universities out of their complacency and inertia" (p. 18–19). Prior to the reforms, university academics were national public servants with jobs guar-

anteed for life (Goodman 2010, p. 72)

Deregulation resulted in greater autonomy and more freedom in setting budgets. However, MEXT still retains control over enrolment numbers and other matters such as reallocating financial resources (Aspinall 2010, p. 11). Thus, MEXT remains influential because it provides public funds and determines standards of physical conditions, including faculty and student numbers attending all HEIs in Japan (Yonezawa & Shimmi 2015, p. 25).

## **Analysing Internationalisation of Higher Education**

In order to better understand the internationalisation of HEIs in Japan, three major components of HEIs – international students, academic staff, and university programmes and curricula – are each considered separately in the following. The section concludes with a short discussion.

### ***International Students***

Student mobility is the dominant factor of internationalisation (van der Wende 1996, p. 15). The personal benefits accruing to students who study abroad include foreign language proficiency, increased understanding of the host country, making new friends in the host country, and subsequently enhanced employment qualifications. First the issue of foreign students studying in Japan is explored, followed by an appraisal of Japanese student mobility to foreign countries.

There has been very little increase in the number of international students in Japanese universities over the last few decades. For example, from 1970 – 1980, the annual growth of international students averaged only 2.3 percent. More recent statistics show 3.3 per cent of all tertiary students enrolled in Ja-



pan are foreigners, which is 45 per cent of the OECD average of 7.3 per cent (Newby et al. 2009, p. 80). Furthermore, 82 per cent of all foreign students come from just four Asian nations, namely China (86,324 or 62.7 per cent), South Korea (16,651 or 12.1 per cent), Vietnam (4,737 or 3.4 per cent) and Taiwan (4,613 or 3.2 per cent) (JASSO 2013, in Chapple 2014, p. 20).

According to Askew (2011), the quality of Japanese higher education is currently so poor that foreign students need to be paid to study at Japanese universities, in the form of generous government scholarships (Askew 2011, in Chapple 2014, p. 20). However, even if the goal of increasing foreign students to supplement the shrinking domestic market is realised, this alone is unlikely to contribute to greater internationalisation. The reasons for this include the common practice of segregating foreign students into special language and culture courses (*bekka*) at universities, providing few opportunities for interaction with Japanese students (Chapple 2014, p. 20).

Considering outward mobility, the number of Japanese students studying overseas has significantly declined, particularly since the start of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The number of students studying abroad peaked at 82,945 in 2004, steadily reducing to 58,060 in 2010 (Chapple 2014, p. 20). A reported disincentive to overseas study is the linguistic demand of needing to understand and use an international language such as English (van der Wende 1996, p. 15). This and other reasons are proposed for the fall in numbers :

- Economic reasons due to the continuing national recession ;
- Increasing language requirements to study abroad ;
- Aversion to risk of Japanese younger generation ;
- Lack of employment opportunities after returning to Japan ; and

- Overseas experiences perceived by some to be detrimental to career prospects (Chapple 2014, p. 20).

### *Academic Staff*

The nations of the world are increasingly interdependent and one of the consequences of economic globalisation is the growing importance of regions, regional agreements and alliances (Knight 2008, p. 5). Examples are regional-based trade blocs such as the European Union (EU), Asia-Pacific Economic Community (APEC), Free Trade Agreement of the Americas (FTAA, formerly NAFTA), and Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Accompanying the growth of regionalisation has been a trend in higher education to develop regional-based academic staff mobility programmes, such as EU-ASEAN and EU-Latin America (Knight 2008, p.5).

Japan plays an important role in UMAP (University Mobility in Asia and the Pacific) and the UMAP credit transfer system between participating universities. However, the regional integration framework of UMAP lacks recognition of qualifications, quality and status of HEIs, and the comparability of curricula. By comparison, regional integration frameworks in Europe are superior to UMAP. Therefore, Japan should apply for observer status or membership of Bologna if it wishes to strengthen the processes of internationalisation of Japan's HEIs (Newby et al. 2009, pp. 85–6). Alternatively, Japan could initiate efforts for UMAP to replicate the framework and protocols of the Bologna Process.

When compared with other OECD countries, foreign academic staff numbers in Japan's HEIs are very few, even at highly ranked research universities. For example, in 2005 at the University of Tokyo there were about 1% full pro-

fessors and 3% associate professors of foreign nationality (Newby et al. 2009, p. 84). In 2011 the total number of foreign staff teaching fulltime in Japanese HEIs was only 6,603, or less than 4 per cent, which is remarkably few compared to the 27 per cent of foreign academics working in the UK, for example (Chapple 2014, p. 19).

### ***Curricula & Programmes***

Van der Wende (1996) enumerates specific curriculum innovations that are connected to internationalisation, including infusing existing courses with international content ; comparative approaches in teaching and research ; area studies and civilisational approaches ; international studies and intercultural studies ; international development studies ; and integrating foreign languages in the curriculum (van der Wende, 1996, p. 18).

Several of the foregoing curriculum innovations reflect the UNESCO Guidelines on Intercultural Education (2006), which state “Interculturality is a dynamic concept and refers to evolving relations between cultural groups. It has been defined as the existence and equitable interaction of diverse cultures and the possibility of generating shared cultural expressions through dialogue and mutual respect ... [and] presupposes multiculturalism.” (p. 17). Therefore, intercultural education plays a key role in equipping students and staff of HEIs with cultural knowledge, attitudes and skills that help them to respect and understand people from other cultures. To achieve these goals, the design of curricula for intercultural education needs to comprise the following principles :

1. Discovery of cultural diversity, awareness of the positive value of such diversity, and respect for diverse cultural heritage ;
2. Critical awareness of the struggle against racism and discrimination ;

3. Knowledge about cultural heritage through history, literature, and other subjects ;
4. Understanding and respect for all peoples ;
5. Awareness of the increasing global interdependence between peoples and nations ;
6. Awareness of right and duties of individuals, social groups and nations toward each other ;
7. Understanding of the need for international solidarity and cooperation ;
8. Awareness of one's own cultural values that underlie interpretation of situations and problems and the ability to reflect on and review information by using the knowledge of different cultural perspectives ; and
9. Respect for different ways of thinking (UNESCO, 2006, p. 37).

The foregoing principles of interculturality shape a society's cultural values by raising awareness of cultural differences, encouraging inclusiveness, acceptance of diversity, and thereby help to dispel racial prejudice and xenophobia. Understanding and practicing these principles in Japanese HEIs will assist in implementing the goals of internationalisation and simultaneously help to ensure that international students can fully participate in their adopted Japanese HEIs.

In another development that significantly impacts on the internationalisation of HEIs programmes and curricula, the World Trade Organization/ General Agreement on Trade in Services (WTO/ GATS) aims to liberalise international trade in education and professional services, and this is expected to further strengthen the process of commercialisation of international higher education (Kim 2009a, p. 394). In particular, these measures will facilitate the expansion

sion of offshore delivery modes of higher education in several ways, including :

1. 'Cross-border supply' where the provider/instructor does not need to physically move to provide, for example, 'distance learning' and 'online programmes' ;
2. 'Consumption abroad' where the student moves to the country of the education provider ;
3. 'Commercial presence' where an educational service provider cooperates with local institutions in another country to establish branch campuses and twinning programmes with local institutions in another country ;
4. 'Physical presence of provider' where persons (e.g. professors and researchers) temporarily travel to another country to provide educational services (Altbach & Knight 2007, pp. 291 – 2 ; UNESCO 2013, p. 9).

Beginning in the late 1980s, preceding the GATS measures, many of the foregoing activities were implemented by Japanese HEIs, including twinning and joint-degree programmes with overseas universities, as well as establishing offshore programmes and campuses. These strategies were mainly used to provide a Japanese home institution for undergraduate students studying abroad. For example, several Japanese private universities established branch campuses in Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States, as well as in Denmark and the Netherlands (Huang 2007, p. 10). However, by 2005, only five of these offshore campuses remained open, in the United States (3), United Kingdom (1), and New Zealand (1) (Newby et al. 2009, p.81).

### ***Discussion***

In the foregoing examination of three major components of HEIs – international students (both incoming and outgoing), academic staff, and university programmes and curricula – there is little evidence of widespread internationalisation occurring. To the contrary, and according to Hiroshi Ota (2014):

As part of the university reform agenda, Japanese universities, especially national universities, have only just begun to make organized and strategic efforts towards internationalization, emphasizing the leadership of university presidents (Ota 2014, p. 248).

Clearly the internationalisation activities of Japan's HEIs are only just beginning. In addition, there are very few cases where HEIs are initiating such projects by themselves without government involvement or direction. Furthermore, these incipient internationalisation activities are mainly government-funded (discussed later), and such activities seem to be less motivated by opportunistic commercialism and financial gain than by Japanese aspirations to internationalise, as well as to more effectively compete with leading universities in the Asian region.

An OECD report published in 2009 criticizes the lack of an international dimension to much of university life in Japan, arguing “Japan is strongly regionally oriented in its internationalisation activities of higher education ...” (Newby et al. 2009, p. 85). Therefore, it might be deduced that global pressures, such as global capitalism, are exerting less influence on Japan than they are on other OECD and Asia-Pacific nations such as Australia. Moreover, though Japan's regionalisation activities seem to be well-developed, its internationalisation is only

just emerging.

## **Current Strategies for Internationalisation**

Rather than Japanese HEIs taking steps to internationalise themselves, it is nearly always the government that has initiated internationalisation policies ; rarely have universities done so. The first government internationalisation policy for national universities was launched in 1983, the ‘100,000 Plan’, aiming to receive 100,000 foreign students to study in Japan by the year 2000 ; a goal finally realised in 2003. Following this in 2008, the government initiated a more ambitious policy of attracting 300,000 foreign students and sending 120,000 students abroad by the year 2020.

There are currently several universities, all privately operated, strongly focussing on internationalisation by offering an international learning experience with a high-percentage of English-taught courses, a diversified student population and faculty, and a variety of study abroad programmes. Two of the more well known ones are Akita International University (AIU) and the Asia-Pacific University (APU) in Beppu. AIU, established in 2004, has 834 students, 14 per cent of whom are foreign students, and come from one of the 130 overseas universities with which AIU has developed a partnership. Also, half of the faculty is non-Japanese and all classes are taught in English. Similarly, APU, founded in 2000 by Ritsumeikan University in Kyoto, has 2,692 students from 81 countries, and the highest ratio (43 per cent) of foreign students studying for a degree in Japan (Education in Japan 2013, p. 2).

A survey published by *The Nikkei Shimbun* (economics newspaper) in 2012 ranked the University of Tokyo, AIU and APU as the best three universities where leading Japanese companies were recruiting multicultural and multil-

ingual students. This demonstrates that Japanese employers are looking for talented foreign graduates who are capable of helping companies to compete in the global market, and new universities such as AIU and APU are outdoing the larger, older schools at cultivating talent and attracting the attention of corporate recruiters (Tanikawa 2012, in *Education in Japan 2013*, p. 2–3).

Unfortunately, the foregoing innovative and international private HEIs are not seen as models of internationalisation to be emulated by national universities, and they have received little support from MEXT and government agencies. “Instead, MEXT has basically continued to assist the same old elite institutions [mainly national HEIs] in imitating those internationalized [private] universities’ efforts with a large amount of the fund” (Ota 2014, p. 250). Such contradictory behaviour casts doubt on the sincerity of government attempts to internationalise Japan’s HEIs.

## **Conclusion**

This study finds insufficient evidence to directly link globalisation forces to the internationalisation efforts of Japan’s HEIs. Instead, regional economic influences of leading HEIs in East Asia and Southeast Asia have spurred Japan’s HEIs to compete more strongly in the Asian sphere than in the global arena. Also, some of Japan’s HEIs, particularly the elite national universities, have a strong desire to improve their global ranking and to compare more favourably with world class HEIs in Europe and the United States. These aspirations to improve prestige, regional competitiveness and global ranking, have triggered efforts by Japan to internationalise its HEIs, though such initiatives have mainly been taken by MEXT and the government. To a large extent, internationalisation projects are being publicly funded on a competitive basis. However, as



shown above, overall government spending on higher education is already low by international standards and unlikely to increase due to Japan's continuing economic recession.

According to Newby et al. (2009), "Japan is strongly regionally oriented in its internationalisation activities in higher education" (p. 85). The evidence for this, discussed above, is that relatively few of Japan's HEIs – mainly the elite national universities – have begun pursuing internationalisation goals, though several private HEIs are already well-advanced in achieving theirs. However, most of the internationalisation activities being undertaken are piecemeal, relatively small and additive in nature. They are not integrated into education systems' strategic and long-term plans. Unlike other OECD and Asia Pacific nations such as Australia, little urgency is felt by Japan to attract more fee-paying international students to increase the income of HEIs, thus forfeiting a potentially lucrative source of income, and simultaneously missing out on the student mobility that constitutes a major measure of internationalisation.

Julian Chapple (2014) argues "... systems in Japan have not adjusted to meet the needs or demands of the globalising world today and until university systems change to suit, there is little pressure or possibility of universities fully internationalising" (Chapple 2014, p. 24). This is because the globalisation pressures on HEIs that are strongly evident in other developed countries such as Australia are less obvious in Japan where institutional change is occurring relatively slowly. Therefore, the forces of globalisation, in particular global capitalism, cannot be directly linked to the relatively embryonic and small-scale activities of internationalisation occurring in Japan's higher education today.

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