

# Immigration and Japan

## Benefits and risks of increasing immigration; Does Japan need more immigrants?

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### Abstract

In recent years, the number of foreign residents in Japan is on the increase. The Japanese government put the point-based system into effect for immigration treatment and attempt to accept more highly-skilled foreign nations. However, Japan still has its strict policies which prohibit unskilled foreign workers to work in Japan. Japanese working-age population is on the decrease. There is a significant need for better immigration policies which enable Japan to accept more international migrants and to boost the working-age population. This paper examines potential benefits, problems and risks of receiving more international migrants both high skilled and unskilled to Japan and some suggestions for a better immigration policy of Japan will be considered.

### Introduction

Immigration, the movement of people from one country to another is a great contributor to globalization. Foreign workers are playing important rolls in Japanese economy; however, increasing number of immigrants coming to Japan is raising anxieties among the Japanese nation at the same time. Moreover, Japan is closed to immigrants and Japan's immigration policies are not developed very well. Although it is very challenging for Japan to open up the country to immigration, Japan should consider accepting more international migrants because equitable immigration could be beneficial to Japan.

### Purpose of study

This paper aims to give an overview of the present situation of immigration in Japan and examine potential benefits, problems and risks of receiving more international migrants to Japan. In

addition, some suggestions for a better immigration policy for Japan will be considered.

### Chapter 1 The present situation of immigration in Japan

In this chapter, the present situation of immigration in Japan will be illustrated.

#### Chapter 1.1 The definition of immigrants

There is no clear definition of the term immigrant made by the Japanese government. According to the United Nations (2016 p. 4), 'an international migrant is a person who is living in a country other than his or her country of birth'. International migrants can be categorized as follows:

**Temporary labour migrants** (also known as guest workers or overseas contract workers): people who migrate for a limited period of time in order to take up employment and send money home.

**Highly skilled and business migrants**: people with qualifications as managers, executives, professionals, technicians or similar, who move within the internal labour markets of trans-national corporations and international organisations, or who seek employment through international labour markets for scarce skills. Many countries welcome such migrants and have special 'skilled and business migration' programmes to encourage them to come.

**Irregular migrants (or undocumented / illegal migrants)**: people who enter a country, usually in search

of employment, without the necessary documents and permits.

**Forced migration:** in a broader sense, this includes not only refugees and asylum seekers but also people forced to move due to external factors, such as environmental catastrophes or development projects. This form of migration has similar characteristics to displacement.

**Family members** (or family reunion / family reunification migrants): people sharing family ties joining people who have already entered an immigration country under one of the above mentioned categories. Many countries recognise in principle the right to family reunion for legal migrants. Other countries, especially those with contract labour systems, deny the right to family reunion. (United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization n.d.)

In this paper, any foreign people who live in Japan both temporarily and permanently will be considered as immigrants. However, focus is placed on the first two categories; temporary labour migrants and highly skilled and business migrants.

## **Chapter 1.2 Changes in the number of foreign residents in Japan**

Throughout the history, the number of international migrants coming to Japan has always been negligible; however, the number of foreign residents in Japan is on the increase in recent years. The total number of mid to long term residents and special permanent residents in Japan was 2,121,831 at the end of 2014, which number is 2.7 per cent higher compared to the end of 2013. Moreover, 'At the end of 2014, the number of foreign residents as a percentage of the total population of Japan (127,083,000) was 1.67%, which was 0.05 point higher than 1.62% at the end of 2013' (Immigration Bureau, Ministry of Justice, JAPAN 2015, p. 22).

Although the proportion of foreign residents in Japan is on the increase, this ratio of foreign residents to the total population of Japan is still significantly low compared with other OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) countries. According to Coppel, Dumont and Visco (2001, p. 6), Japan received approximately 270,000 arrivals in 1998 thanks to the relaxation in the restriction on temporary migration; however, 'relative to population, arrivals remain limited, compared with a number of the smaller OECD countries' (figure 2).

## **Chapter 1.3 The overview of Point-based system**

Point-based system is used for immigration treatment in Japan. According to Ministry of Justice, JAPAN (2015), current point-based system was introduced on May 7, 2012 giving preferential immigration treatment for the purpose of facilitating the acceptance of highly-skilled foreign nations. Ministry of Justice, JAPAN (2015, p. 8) states

This system divides the contents of the activities of the highly-skilled foreign nationals into three categories: "advanced academic research activities", "advanced specialized/technical activities" and "advanced business management activities", and according to the characteristics of each category, points are awarded for each item, such as "academic background," "professional career" and "annual salary", and if the total number of points reaches a certain number of points (70 points), such foreign national becomes eligible for preferential immigration treatment, thereby aiming to facilitate the acceptance of highly-skilled foreign nationals into Japan.

In December 2013, a review was undertaken in order to relax requirements for recognition as a highly-skilled professional and to further the incentives for preferential treatment, and as a result, the number of foreign nationals recognized as highly-skilled professionals has

seen an upward trend. Looking at a breakdown, foreign nationals who were recognized for “advanced specialized/technical activities” comprised approximately 80% of the total (Chart 5).



Source: Ministry of Justice, JAPAN (2015)

However, this system is not well developed. Kingston (2012) argues that Japan has very strict policies prohibiting unskilled foreign workers. Kingston (2012) also states that the aim of point-based system introduced in 2012 is to retain only highly skilled workers and professionals such as doctors, lawyers, researchers, and entrepreneurs by according them preferential treatment in terms of longer periods of stay and a fast track to permanent resident status; the Japanese government estimates that this new points program will benefit about 2,000 people a year. Moreover, Nippon Keidanren (Japanese Business Federation) also supports increased immigration in order to work on labour shortages and declining population; however, the proposals by Nippon Keidanren exclude unskilled workers and makes no provision for permanent residency or a citizenship track for migrants (Kingston 2012).

#### Chapter 1.4 Acceptance of nurses and care workers

Some effort is also made by Japanese government in order to accept nursing and care workers from foreign countries. Ministry of Justice, JAPAN (2015 p. 23) states that ‘foreign certified care worker candidates etc. are being accepted based on an Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) with Indonesia, the Philippines and Vietnam’ in order to meet the growing demand for high-quality

nursing care. According to Kingston (2012 p. 146) ‘Japan has agreed to accept up to 400 Indonesian nurses and 600 caregivers in 2008 and 2009 as “candidates” for government certification if they pass qualifying exams’; however, only 104 Indonesian nurses and 101 caregivers began work in 2008. ‘Candidates are given six months’ Japanese language and vocational training’; however, there are concerns that the candidates cannot develop the requisite language skills fast enough to pass the qualification exam (Kingston 2012 p. 147). As a result, only two of the Indonesian nurses passed the qualification exam in 2009 and it turned out that 63 of the original 104 Indonesian nurses who came to Japan in 2008 had returned home, mentioning language problems (Kingston 2012).

#### Chapter 1.5 Public attitude towards immigration

Japan has been closed to immigration and still has barriers to immigration both socially and legally. In fact, Kingston (2012) argues that immigrants in Japan are feeling less welcome even as their presence has become more indispensable in the early twenty-first century. Public attitudes towards immigration have been opposed and the rights of international migrants in Japan are not protected very well. According to Nagy (2015) many Japanese have very negative opinions about the migrants living in Japan.

This comment is reflective of views of many Japanese residents toward the role of migrants living in Japan. These three responses were given to city researchers in Shinjuku city in 2008.

Please do not let any more foreigners enter than this. Crimes will increase, making it more difficult for Japanese to live (Male, 50–59 years old).

Foreigners should learn more about Japan. Doing this, discrimination by Japanese will disappear. We don’t forget those who make effort. (Male, 20–29 years old).

It is natural that foreigners who come to Japan should do things the Japanese way. It is strange that we provide special services for them. We should not give them any special treatment (Male, 40–49 years old). (Shinjuku City cited in Nagy 2015, p. 380).

## **Chapter 1.6 The number of migrants Japan needs for the future**

Japan is one of the fastest ageing countries on the earth. Nagy (2015) stated that Japan's population is expected to drop to 115 million by 2030, and to approximately 90 million by 2055. This significant population decline will cause negative impacts on Japanese economy. The United Nations highlighted the number of international migrants Japan needs under various situations and helps put the immigration issue in perspective (Kingston 2012). The UN Population Division stated that:

If Japan wishes to keep the size of its population at the level attained in the year 2005, the country would need 17 million net immigrants up to the year 2050, or an average of 381,000 immigrants per year between 2005 and 2050. By 2050, the immigrants and their descendants would total 22.5 million and comprise 17.7 per cent of the total population of the country. In order to keep the size of the working-age population constant at the 1995 level of 87.2 million, Japan would need 33.5 million immigrants from 1995 through 2050. This means an average of 609,000 immigrants are needed per year during this period. Under this scenario, the population of the country is projected to be 150.7 million by 2050. The number of post-1995 immigrants and their descendants would be 46 million, accounting for 30 per cent of the total population in 2050 (UN Population Division cited in Kingston 2012, p. 151).

The number of migrants pointed by the UN is far greater than the current situation. Clearly, there is a significant need for more favourable immigration policies which enable Japan to accept more international migrants and encourages foreign people to migrate to Japan. The potential benefits and risks of receiving more international migrants in Japan will be examined in the following chapters.

## **Chapter 2 Benefits of receiving more international migrants to Japan**

Equitable immigration could bring benefits to receiving countries. Immigrants can fill the labour shortage, contribute to a better economic cycle and the globalization of receiving country.

### **Chapter 2.1 Migrants as labour force**

In recent years, millions of people leave their home countries to seek opportunity abroad; Indian technicians, for instance, are seeking high-paying jobs in the information sector, Filipino nurses are filling gap in industrial-country health care systems and low-skilled Indonesians and Pakistanis are labouring in the oilfield of the rich Gulf states (Goldin 2006).

It could be beneficial for Japan to accept more immigrants because they could fill the labour shortages in Japan. Ganelli and Miake (2015) suggest that Japan is suffering from labour shortages which have a negative impact on potential growth and reduce the effectiveness of monetary and fiscal stimulus according to data and anecdotal evidence. For instance, labour shortages are particularly strong for medical doctors and medical technicians and nurses and midwives among specialist and technicians sector, restaurant servers and home service and long-term care providers in the service sector, structure construction workers in the construction sector (Ganelli & Miake 2015). Moreover, Ganelli and Miake (2015) argue that according to a survey of global employers conducted by the Manpower Group, 81 percent of Japanese firms

reported that they are having difficulties in filling job in 2014 and this was the highest number among all the countries surveyed and more than double the global average of 36 percent. Kingston (2012, p.142) also argues that 'Japan faces a serious shortage of nurses and caregivers as the number of elderly requiring nursing care is projected to total 7.8 million in FY2025–6, a 1.7-fold increase from FY2006–7'.

Japan might be able to resolve this labour shortages by accepting more international migrants. In fact, as it was cited in the first chapter, some effort has been made by Japanese government in order to fill the labour shortages in nursing and care givers sectors by accepting nursing and care workers from Indonesia and Philippines since 2008. However, it has not been successful. According to Kingston (2012), there is high demand for Filipino nurses around the world and these nurses prefer English-speaking countries; about 18,000 Filipino nurses and caregivers go overseas every year, with the US and Canada as top destinations. It was stated that:

In other countries they are highly sought after and can start work and be earning money immediately, whereas in Japan they have 6 months of language instruction before they start earning wages. In addition, in other countries they are welcome to stay and many prefer Canada because it facilitates naturalization of migrant workers rather than sending them home if they fail difficult certification exams (Kingston 2012, p.148).

In fact, many Indonesian nurses who came to Japan had returned home citing language problem. Clearly, there is a significant need for a better designed program to accept more foreign nurses and care givers in more favourable terms.

Another problem is that Japan has very strict policies against accepting non-skilled or low-skilled workers from foreign countries. Coppel, Dumont and Visco (2001) argue that there has

been a shift in labour demand of receiving country towards skilled workers and increased emphasis on attracting skilled immigrants. In Japan, point-based system was introduced in 2012 in order to accept highly skilled foreign nations.

Japan should also allow low-skilled workers to enter the country at least as seasonal workers. Low-skilled or even non-skilled workers could still fill the labour shortages in some jobs such as agriculture and other blue-collar jobs where labour shortages are evident. In the United States, the share of foreigners employed in agriculture is considerably high compared with the share for nationals (Coppel, Dumont & Visco 2001). Some of OECD countries also allow immigrants to enter temporarily as seasonal workers and most of them work in the agricultural sector (Coppel, Dumont & Visco 2001).

Furthermore, low-skilled immigrants could also help fill the gap for undesirable jobs that Japanese are not willing to take. Kingston (2012) argues that although the Japanese government knew that companies needed more workers doing undesirable jobs that the Japanese avoided because of low pay, they did not want to deal with the potential problems caused by accepting migrant workers. Others stated that immigrants will be needed to fill undesirable jobs.

Finding labor for undesirable jobs is expected to become particularly difficult. Large-scale immigration specifically from poor countries with low wages and low expectations concerning conditions of work will be needed to fill "dirty" jobs that are difficult to mechanize and that the domestic labor force will not undertake as its expectations rise. A permanent stream of first-generation immigrants will be needed to fill the bottom layer of this "dual labor market" (Piore 1979; Stalker 1994: Ch. 4; Fassmann 1997 cited in Coleman & Rowthorn 2004, pp. 584-585).

Nevertheless, there is still strong reticence in Japan toward allowing the settling of migrants especially those who are non-skilled and it is illogical that ‘the kinds of jobs that unskilled workers would take are the ones that Japanese have shunned for more than 30 years, such as many in manufacturing, agriculture, forestry, and fishing’ (Nagy 2015, p. 382). Therefore, there is no doubt that accepting more international migrants even if they are low-skilled can be beneficial for Japan as they could fill the labour shortages in Japan.

## **Chapter 2.2 Economic Benefits of receiving more immigrants**

Receiving more immigrants could also bring economic benefits to Japan. First of all, simply, there will be more people paying taxes if Japan successfully receive more immigrants and boost working-age population. Gott and Johnson (cited in Coleman & Rowthorn 2004) claim that inflows of working-age immigrants will generate a positive net contribution to the national account because youthful immigrants modestly use social welfare system and this modest welfare costs are more than compensated by tax contribution of working immigrants. Japan’s young-age group population is on the decline and there is a need for more taxpayers in order to keep the national social welfare system solvent, which includes medical and pension programs. Increased immigration might be able to create an immediate positive impact on government revenue assuming that the working-age people immigrate to Japan. In fact, Goldin (2006) argues that immigrants may contribute to the long-term survival of public pension systems in host countries of immigration by lowering the average age of population.

Secondly, economic activities of immigrants could make a positive impact on the local economy. Coppel, Dumont and Visco (2001, p.16) claim that ‘immigration creates demand for goods and services produced by the host population with favourable consequences for labour demand’. Migrants pay rent, buy homes

and purchase goods, all of which feed the local economy and contribute to a better economic cycle. In the United Kingdom, large-scale immigration is officially considered to be essential for the UK’s economic wellbeing and beneficial for its society (Coleman & Rowthorn 2004). Moreover, Goldin (2006) argues that even a modest increase in migration inflows could boost global output by \$150 billion a year although it is considerably difficult to estimate the impact of migration on a global scale. Immigration has always been a formidable engine of economic and domestic growth for the United States. Borjas (cited in Coppel, Dumont & Visco 2001, p. 16) reported that immigration inflows induced ‘a small net gain, equivalent to 0.1 per cent of GDP or \$10 billion per annum’, based on the US experience. However, it should be noted that these assessments of the economic impact generated by immigration inflows largely depend on ‘the economic performance of immigrants themselves and how quickly they adapt to the new environment’ (Coppel, Dumont & Visco 2001, p. 16).

Some argue that although immigration generates small net gains in terms of per capita output to the host country, the benefits are not necessarily evenly distributed within the nation of the host country; some could gain; however, some may lose from immigration (Coppel, Dumont & Visco 2001). It may be true; however, theoretically, it is plausible that immigration had indeed boosted growth where immigrants have been welcomed (Goldin 2006). This will be described in detail in Chapter 3.4. Hence, it can be summarized that increased immigration could create a positive impact on government revenue, contribute to a better economic cycle and the host countries of immigrants are more likely to benefit from immigration on a national scale than to lose from immigration.

## **Chapter 2.3 Adding global competitiveness to Japanese industries**

Immigrant workers could contribute to the globalization of Japan. Kingston (2012, p. 137) argues that 'Japan is certainly not as diverse as Europe and the US, but it has become more diverse and in some respects is a multi-ethnic society in denial'. In fact, the proportion of foreign residents was only 1.67% of the total population of Japan in 2014 (Immigration Bureau, Ministry of Justice, JAPAN 2015). On the other hand, some countries have successfully integrated immigrants into their society. It was stated that

In Singapore, the richest country in Southeast Asia, immigrants make up a quarter of the workforce; the two wealthiest countries in Europe, Luxembourg and Switzerland, also have the largest proportion of immigrants workers; in Dubai, perhaps the most dynamic economy in the Middle East, migrants workers actually outnumber the native-born nine to one. (Goldin 2006, p. 114-115)

Increased immigration could contribute greatly to Japan's global competitiveness. Immigrant workers could make a diversity in workplace which would help company or enterprise globalize their organization; the business networks could be expanded with employees from a lot of different backgrounds. Hiring immigrants makes it easier for business organization to expand their business into foreign market thanks to the immigrant workers who know their culture. For instance, when a Japanese business organization seeks to expand their business into Chinese market, a Chinese sales representative working for the Japanese business organization could provide language and cultural knowledge which are hard to comprehend for Japanese people. Business organizations could also gain broader perspectives and knowledge supplied by people from different backgrounds.

Furthermore, well-educated and highly trained foreign workers are inventive and productive. They increase business flexibility, allowing companies to quickly respond to changing demands. Goldin (2006) argues that immigrants may bring in skills and expertise which are in short supply in host country and it will possibly stimulate innovation throughout whole sectors. Moreover, bandwidth effect; broadening of trade and investment links can be expected by increased immigration; it works and benefits both immigrants' host country and home countries (Goldin 2006).

Immigration, the movement of people from one country to another, is closely related to the globalization of the world. Goldin (2006 p.118) claims

Globalization has made millions in the developing world more aware of higher standard of living that people in the industrialized world enjoy, and development has lowered the international and financial cost and travel times involved and raised living standards to the point where migration is considered by many.

Increased immigration could contribute to Japan's global competitiveness by helping business organizations broaden its markets and enriches Japanese culture by bringing new perspectives and cultures. Hence, there is no doubt that immigration could contribute to the globalization of Japan.

## **Chapter 3 Potential risks and problems caused by increased immigrants**

Opponents of immigration have concerns about adverse impacts of increased immigration on the social conditions, labour market, public finances, collision of culture and so on. In this chapter, four potential risks of increased immigration will be discussed.

### **Chapter 3.1 Possibility that increased migrants disturb the public peace of the host country**

Opponents of immigration often point out that Japan's public peace may be disturbed by increased number of immigrants. There are wide-spread perceptions in Japan that foreigners often commit crimes (Kingston 2012). Shinjuku-city conducted an interview in 2006 and one of the respondents answered as follows: 'Please do not let any more foreigners enter than this. Crimes will increase, making it more difficult for Japanese to live (Male, 50–59 years old)' (Shinjuku-city cited in Nagy 2015, p.380). In fact, the arrival of increased immigrants was expected to cause a disorganization in the destinations of immigrants because of the limited mechanisms to aid in incorporation of immigrants (Ferraro 2013).

A number of studies do not support this perception. Kingston (2012) argues that disproportionate to the number of foreigners, national crime statistics show that in fact foreigners do not resort to crime and most of their offenses are related to visa violations. Other researchers also found that increased immigrants and crime are not correlated. Bianchi, Buonanno and Pinotti (2012) investigated the causal impact of immigration on crime across Italian provinces during the 1990s and failed to support the widespread perception of a causal relationship between immigration and crime. According to the research conducted in the United States by Ferraro (2013, p.142),

Changes in immigration exert no effect on changes in crime, whether overall, violent, or property; whether among immigrants arriving only within the previous five years or those who have been here for decades; and whether in places with established histories of immigrant reception or those whose histories are just beginning casts another boulder of doubt on the persistent perception of an immigration-crime link.

Furthermore, Polczynski Olson et al. (2009) reported that levels of criminal involvement of immigrants is in fact lower than the native born with few exceptions based on recent investigations. 'The

current wave of immigration into the United States does not increase crime and, in many cases, a higher percentage of immigrants in the population is associated with lower crime rates' (Polczynski Olson et al. 2009, p. 237). In addition, Smith and Furesth (cited in Ferraro 2013, p.142) claim that 'immigrant communities are able to provide their members with support systems by which to manage the stressors of social, cultural, and economic marginalization'.

In this way, most of the studies similarly deny the correlation between increased immigrants and crimes. Clearly, increased immigration does not always mean higher crime rate. These findings on immigration and crime should be able to get rid of the image of immigrants as a criminal element and change the negative public image of immigration.

### **Chapter 3.2 Impact on unemployment of native population**

There has been an argument that increased immigrants will take jobs from native workers and create negative impacts on unemployment. Coppel, Dumont and Visco (2001) argue that the opponents of immigration have concerns that increased immigration will lead to higher unemployment and lower wages for the native population; however, the negative impact of immigration on unemployment are not obvious.

There have been mainly two arguments about the impact of immigration on labour market. The first argument is that for every immigrant who finds employment, a native-born worker is displaced (Greenwood & McDowell cited in Borjas & Tienda 1987). This argument was made based on the assumptions that the number of jobs is fixed and immigrant workers can be perfect substitutes in the production process; however, these assumptions are not necessarily correct (Borjas & Tienda 1987). The other argument is that the entry of immigrant workers into the labour



market does not result in a significant displacement of native-born workers because immigrants take a distinct set of jobs which are undesirable jobs that native-born workers are not willing to take (Piore cited in Borjas & Tienda 1987). For the most part the native-born workers work in the good jobs available in the primary sector, whereas immigrant workers, especially who are non-skilled, are relegated to the low-paying jobs in the secondary sector (Borjas & Tienda 1987). Immigrant workers may compete for jobs with native-born workers who work in the secondary sector which requires no skills. The impacts of immigration on the labour market mostly depend on the skills of immigrant workers and how quickly they adapt themselves to the new working environment.

Nonetheless, most studies fail to find the obvious adverse impacts of immigration on the unemployment of native-born population. 'Available empirical studies from the United States fail to find that immigration has harmful effects in terms of raising unemployment in the receiving country' (Simon, Borjas, & Friedberg & Hunt cited in Coppel, Dumont & Visco 2001, p.15). A few studies show that there are small negative effects of immigration on unemployment in Europe (Winkelman & Zimmerman cited in Coppel, Dumont & Visco 2001).

Hence, it can be concluded that the increased immigration does not have obvious negative impact on the unemployment of native-born workers; even if there are small negative impact, it can be negligible.

### **Chapter 3.3 Fiscal costs of receiving more immigrants**

There is a concern that increased immigration may increase the fiscal cost of its host country. The host country has to assimilate the international migrants in favourable ways; providing language program, employment supports and so on all of which will be initial costs to the host country. It was stated that

The host community also needs to play its part in the bargain by creating an open and welcoming environment: providing language tuition; recognizing qualifications and giving employment advice; making available classes on its political institutions, laws and values; giving political leadership and working with the public to fight racism and discrimination. Giving migrants access to work should be the central part of the integration process. It is not just an important way for migrants to put something back into society, it is central to their self-esteem, a critical way to build up social networks, learn the language and become embedded in local society. (Nagy 2015 p. 367)

Coppel, Dumont and Visco (2001 p.16) argue that although there is concerns about the size of the fiscal cost of immigration and policies such as language training specially designed to facilitate the pace of migrant assimilation, an assessment of the economic impact of immigration depends to a large degree on the economic performance of immigrants themselves and how quickly they succeed in integrating themselves into the labour market in the host country.

Other common concern is that immigrants may consume more public welfare services than they contribute in tax revenue. Public health care systems may be hard put to accommodate the arrival of large numbers of immigrants who are uninsured (Goldin 2006). The question is whether increased immigration places an additional cost on social welfare, education and health systems which is not compensated by higher tax payments (Coppel, Dumont & Visco 2001). Coppel, Dumont and Visco (2001) argue that some governments put policies such as waiting periods in place, which restrict access of new arrivals to some social protection payments, including unemployment benefits. However, as stated in chapter 2.2, most studies found that immigrants are less

likely to receive public assistance, even when they do, they modestly use social welfare system compared to natives.

Costs that the host country has to compensate may initially increase as the host country has to help the assimilation of immigrants; however, in the long run, the cost should not be huge as immigrants start to work and pay taxes.

### **Chapter 3.4 Possibility that increased immigration will increase the opponents of immigration**

There is a concern that increased immigration will increase the opponents of immigration because of different lifestyle of immigrants. The impact of a large influx of immigrants from quite different cultures on the local culture could be a cost to the host country (Goldin 2006). In Japan, as immigrants increase in the local community, local residents encountered difficulties with their new neighbours who have different lifestyle (Kingston 2012). It might be more difficult for the local communities to sustain their identities when they are forced to accept the entry and diversity of immigrants. Many immigrants found that the Japanese people they encountered to be cold, unfriendly and unreceptive making integration of immigrants more difficult (Kingston 2012). Interestingly, a respondent of an interview conducted by Shinjuku-city (cited in Nagy 2015 p. 380) claimed 'Foreigners should learn more about Japan. Doing this, discrimination by Japanese will disappear. We don't forget those who make effort'. It is obvious that multicultural coexistence should be dealt with special care ensuring that the local community can maintain the Japanese integrity.

Moreover, local workers whose labour is substitutable with immigrant workers could lose from immigration and these people could become the opponents of immigration. Rapid increase of immigration could create an antipathy and antagonism among the local population. In order to avoid these potential risks of increased

immigration, a proper immigration policy needs to be developed. Further suggestion about this matter will be made in chapter 4.

## **Chapter 4 Suggestions for a future immigration policy of Japan**

Taking account of the discussion in the chapter 2 and 3, some suggestions for Japan's new immigration policy will be considered in this chapter.

### **Chapter 4.1 Respect for immigrants' right**

Some researchers proposed the things need to be considered for the better immigration policy. Berry (cited in Nagy 2015, p. 368) illustrated three essential features of integration of immigrants.

- Equality: Everyone is treated equally, has a right to fair outcomes, and no one should expect special privileges because of what they are.
- Participation: All groups in the society should expect to share in how decisions are made, but should also expect to carry the responsibilities of making the society work.
- Interaction: No one should be trapped within his/her own community. In a truly integrated society, he/she should be able to work with and have friendships in and outside his/her own cultural/ ethnic community.

Global Commission on International Migration (GCIM cited in Goldin 2006 p. 119) placed an emphasis on human right of immigrants. These are the six broad principles proposed by GCIM.

- People should be able to migrate by choice rather than out of necessity, in a safe and authorized manner and because their skills are valued and needed.
- The role of migrants in promoting economic growth, development, and poverty reduction should be recognized and reinforced; migration must become an integral part of global development strategies.
- States, exercising their sovereign right to decide who enters their territory, should cooperate with each other

in an effort to stem irregular migration, while fully respecting the rights of migrants and refugees and readmitting those citizens who choose to return their home country.

- Long-term and authorized migrants should be effectively integrated in the societies where they settle, so as to accommodate social diversity and foster social cohesion; migrants must be aware of their rights and respect their legal obligations.
- The human rights framework affecting international migrants should be implemented more effectively, so as to improve protections and labor standards for migrants.
- Migration policies should be enhanced by improved coherence and strengthened capacity at the national level, by greater cooperation at the regional level, and by more effective dialogue and consultation among governments and between international organizations at the global level.

These principles and suggestions should be used as a base for Japan's new immigration policy. In particular, immigrants' right should be regarded as important. Immigrants should be considered as equal partners with local Japanese people who can bring some benefits and help make Japan a better country.

#### **Chapter 4.2 Acceptance of low-skilled**

Acceptance of low-skilled workers should be included in the new immigration policy as well as high-skilled foreign nationals. Japan should allow low-skilled workers to work in Japan at least as a short seasonal worker. They can fill the labour shortages in some sectors such as agriculture and others. However, the acceptance of low-skilled workers needs to be done with special care. Risks of accepting more immigrants need to be managed in a proper way. There need to be a clear guideline which indicates what jobs can be filled with immigrant workers.

New immigration policy needs to be designed to enable business organizations to access the human resources or skills that they need to fill the labour shortages; not to replace native-born workforce with cheap labour from abroad. Great care is required to ensure that Japanese workers with comparable skills are not displaced.

#### **Chapter 4.3 Avoiding cultural conflicts**

In Japan, there is a lack of the recognition for immigrants' roles in Japanese economy among the native-born nation. Raising awareness of the roles of immigrants is necessary while promoting immigration in Japan. Emphasis should be placed on cross-cultural understanding in the assimilation of immigrants in order to avoid cultural conflicts. Both Japanese nation and immigrants should understand each other properly. Doing it step by step could help people understand other cultures better; people first have to recognize other culture, then respect the culture and finally reconcile with other culture.

Moreover, Japan should place more focus on accepting more international students from all over the world. This would be a perfect opportunity for young students, both Japanese and non-Japanese, to learn about other cultures. For Japanese students, studying with foreign student could help them learn about different cultures and broaden their views and mind. For foreign students, they can learn Japanese manners and how to do things in Japanese ways by studying with Japanese students which will be advantages for them when they start to work in Japan in the future.

#### **Conclusion**

This paper has illustrated the present situation of immigration in Japan and examined the benefits and problems of receiving more international migrants to Japan. In chapter 2, the benefits of receiving more international migrants has examined; immigrants could fill the labour shortages in Japan, contribute to a better

## References

economic cycle and a global competitiveness of Japanese of industries. Risks and problems of receiving more immigrants have also investigated in chapter 3; adverse impacts on the social conditions, labour market, public finances and collision of culture couldn't be denied. Findings of the study support that the risks of increased immigration are most likely to be compensated by the benefits of increased immigration. In chapter 4, some suggestions for a better immigration policy of Japan were made which include (1) respect for immigrants' right, (2) acceptance of low-skilled and (3) avoidance of cultural conflict. It should be noted that this paper examines only few of many benefits, risks and problems of receiving more immigrants. Additional research might be necessary to more fully understand the latest situation of immigration in Japan and some other benefits and risks which were not included in this paper.

On the 27th January 2017, Donald Trump, the 45th president of the United States, signed an executive order titled "Protection Of The Nation From Foreign Terrorist Entry Into The United States" which suspends the admissions refugees into the United States and prohibits entrance of all people from seven countries (Syria, Iran, Iraq, Sudan, Yemen, Libya and Somalia) for 90 days. President Trump also claims to build a new wall on the border between Mexico and the United States in order to keep out illegal Mexican immigrants. The United States has a large immigrant population and President Trump seems to be concerned about the issues caused by immigrants. Whereas in Japan, population of immigrant is still limited. What should Japan do? Should Japan accept more immigrants? These questions should be considered while taking account of the situation of the whole world; however, Japanese people should not forget how much Japan is dependent on those foreign workers and how much Japan is helped by those foreign workers.

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