

An Assessment of the Struggle on Improving Global Competitiveness of Japan: Focus on the Recent Policies and Practices of Global Human Resource Development

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The struggle of Japan for improving the global competition has started recently by focusing on the human resource development aspect. Data was collected from the Ministry of Education and academic journals. Pros and cons of recent policies and practices have been analyzed to see how the situation can be improved. Japan is known as a country for quality products and advanced technology. While there are many examples for original ideas and technology emerged in Japan, production bases are not confined to Japan. In fact, to cope with extensive global competitiveness with other countries, many Japanese companies were forced to locate their production activities to bases outside Japan. However, although heavy investments were made by the Japanese companies abroad, possibility to contribute overseas operations by the Japanese employees had remained a question unanswered. Nevertheless, Japan started to realize the weaknesses of conventional human resource development practices in order to cope with the rapidly expanding globalization trend of the country. It is common for the young human resources also to use the trend of globalization for expanding their activities beyond the national boundaries, such as by seeking jobs or study opportunities abroad. However, it was the opposite for Japan during the recent past. For example, while students in the countries such as India and China show a rapid increase (increased to 265% & 398% respectively) for higher studies in other countries, Japanese students show a decreasing trend (decreased to 72%) over the 2002-11 period. It was argued that the lack of interest on foreign studies by the Japanese students would negatively impact on the job placement in other countries. The government realized that this situation would hamper the effort for improving the global competitiveness and therefore initiated several new projects. It is now the time to assess how such policies and practices have impacted on improving global competitiveness.

Keywords: Global competitiveness, Foreign investment by Japanese companies, Global human resource development, English education