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# Who are they and why did they move to Japan? An analysis of international faculty at universities

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# Who are they and why did they move to Japan? An analysis of international faculty at universities

Futao Huang

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## Introduction

International mobility of scholars, including faculty or researchers, is one of the oldest forms of internationalisation of higher education. As early as the late 11th century, mobile scholars contributed considerably to the emergence of medieval universities in Europe. In the late 19th century, hiring foreign professors or researchers from Western countries, especially from the UK, the USA, Germany, and France, played a significant role in the formation of Japan's first modern university—the University of Tokyo—and even the modernisation of Japanese higher education (Amano, 2009). The number of international faculty has expanded steadily since the 1950s, with the restructuring of Japan's higher education modelled on US ideas, especially the massification and internationalisation of higher education since the 1960s and late 1970s, respectively (MEXT, 2016). In recent years, despite the insufficient data, international mobility of academics has risen, especially among PhD students and post-doctoral researchers (Van Der Wende, 2015). In addition, Altbach and Yudkevich (2017) find that “international faculty are a growing and increasingly important part of the global academic labor force, bringing diversity, new perspectives, and skills wherever they go.” (8-10)

This study aims to identify the major characteristics and motivations of international faculty at Japanese universities. The study begins with a brief introduction to the literature, research framework, and method. In the second section, the study deals with the background and changes in international faculty at Japanese universities and colleges since 1980. In the third section, the study discusses the key aspects of the personal attributes and career patterns of the international faculty and their motivations for working in Japanese universities and colleges. In the last section, the study concludes by summarising the major findings and offering implications for research, policy, and practice. For the purposes of this study, the term *international faculty* refers to all full-time non-Japanese faculty who are hired in four-year universities and colleges in Japan. Part-time international faculty are not included, despite their considerable number and important role in providing language teaching for undergraduate students in particular.

The importance of undertaking this study is twofold. First, since no such research has been conducted into the educational and professional characteristics of the international faculty at all Japanese universities and colleges, a more detailed description of the international faculty should be provided. Second, analysing the motivations of international faculty working in Japanese universities can help stakeholders, such as government and institutions as well as industries, to create appropriate strategies to recruit and attract international faculty if the demand for them in Japan grows in the future.

## **Literature, research framework, and method**

The study of international faculty is concerned with two broad research areas, namely, the internationalisation of higher education, and university faculty or the academic profession. Compared with research on other aspects of internationalisation of higher education, such as international mobility of students, academic programmes, or branch campuses, little is known of international faculty. For example, Altbach (1989) states that “A large but virtually ignored element of the international study equation is the growing foreign scholar population”. Teichler

(2015) also points out that academic staff and researchers' mobility has not been given as much attention in public debate on the internationalisation of higher education as student mobility.

In terms of existing research on academic professions, an increasing number of studies have been conducted in other countries since 1992, when the first international survey of academic professions was carried out. Many studies on the topic have been published, especially since 2007 when the follow-up Changing Academic Profession (CAP) survey with a similar questionnaire was launched in 18 countries, including Hong Kong. For example, the books published at Springer based on major findings of the CAP survey alone amount to nearly 20 volumes. Hundreds of research papers and reports have also been published in participating country teams. However, except for very few studies (Huang, Martin and Rostan, 2014; Yudkevich, Altbach, and Rumbley, 2017), international faculty have not received the same attention. Despite the rapid increase in international faculty numbers, international faculty at Japanese universities and colleges are studied less frequently compared with those at universities in the USA, Australia, the UK, and other European countries (Welch, 2007; Teichler, 2011; Lawrence et al., 2014). The reason may be the relatively small number of international faculty at Japanese universities and colleges, as well as the fact that gathering accurate and sufficient data is difficult.

In Japan, earlier studies are extremely limited, except for an annual issue of national statistics of international faculty members by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (MEXT). For example, in 1979, Kitamura implemented a national survey of international faculty and presented the main characteristics of 371 international faculty and their views on the internationalisation policy of Japanese higher education (RIHE, 1980). Suh (2005) emphasises the importance of recruiting international faculty at Japanese universities and colleges and discusses various issues and challenges facing the recruitment of international faculty in Japan. Huang and Li (2011) outline general changes that occurred in international faculty and analyse educational and professional profiles of international faculty at the University of Tokyo. Using a survey of international faculty working in 34 Japanese universities as a basis, Yonezawa and Ishida (2012)

suggest that the incentives for entry into the Japanese academic labour market can be mainly divided into two. These incentives are the teaching environment among faculty members in the language education fields or the internationally competitive research environment, especially among faculty members in the STEM fields. Apparently, up to now, no systematic and in-depth studies have been done on personal, educational, and professional identities of all international faculty and their motivations.

Various factors affect the international mobility of faculty from one country to another. For example, the OECD identify potential increases in earnings as one of the most important reasons why people migrate (OECD, 2001). Auriol et al. find that citizens with a doctorate mostly go abroad or return for academic reasons or job-related economic factors, rather than for family or personal reasons (Auriol, Misu, and Freeman, 2013). A relevant theory of studying the motivations of international faculty is primarily concerned with the “push-pull model”. However, this model is widely used to analyse and discuss the international mobility of students from developing or undeveloped countries to advanced or developed countries. For example, according to Altbach, in most cases, students study abroad mainly because they are pushed by unfavourable conditions in their home countries and pulled by advanced opportunities and facilities, internationally recognised universities, and scholars in host countries (Altbach, 1998, 2004). Limitations of the model have been discussed in several previous studies (Jiani, 2016). As the model is a dominant conceptual framework for analysing the incentives or motivations of internationally mobile students, it cannot be fully and precisely applied to analyse international faculty. This is especially true in the case of Japan. As previously mentioned, a large number of international faculty do not come from underdeveloped countries but from Australia, the UK, the USA, Germany, and France. They were hired by Japanese universities and asked to be primarily involved in language teaching activities.

With respect to methodology, two main research methods are employed in this study. One is a quantitative analysis of personal attributes and career paths of the full-time international faculty in Japanese universities and colleges. By looking at the homepages and other publicly available sources of approximately 180,000 full-time faculty in all Japanese universities and colleges from October 2016 to mid-March

2017, the author gathered the profiles of 5,351 faculty who are considered to be international faculty by name. Personal, educational, and professional characteristics of international faculty were analysed.

However, there are several potential issues arising from using web pages as the primary source for the quantitative analysis. Firstly, not all the international faculty have public web pages. This study has gathered less than the data of 5,351 international faculty, but according to the national statistics, there are about 7,000 internationals who were hired by Japanese universities, junior colleges, and other institutions in 2016. Secondly, many of them did not provide a standardised format for their personal information, such as educational and working experiences, for the purpose of this research. Thirdly, even if some of their names appear to be foreign, a small number of them might have been naturalised after March when the data was already cleaned and might have become Japanese nationals. Their numbers should not be significant due to Japanese regulations, but it is possible that the current list of international faculty being employed in this study might include a very small number of Japanese nationals. Finally, as 1 April is the beginning of the new academic term in Japanese universities and colleges, a number of international faculty might have been retired by the end of March 2017, moved to other universities, or even returned to their home countries. All these factors might have an impact on the precision of the quantitative analysis of the profiles of international faculty.

The other method is qualitative, which is based on interviews with international faculty from different sectors and types of universities. The author conducted semi-structured and open-ended interviews with international faculty working in several different universities between August 2015 and April 2016 (Table 1). Five universities were selected based on administration or sector, location, history, academic reputation, and research and teaching activities. Two research-intensive national universities with high social and academic reputation in Japan and abroad were included in the research. However, the two universities are located in different regions and differ in history. Other cases refer to one local public university in which internationalisation has been greatly stimulated from its establishment, and two



private universities with different academic orientations or focus, history, and locations.

Among the interviewees, six international faculty are male and three are female. Three international faculty come from social science, two from science, two from humanities, and one from engineering. One comes from the USA, one from the UK, one from Australia, one from France, one from China, one from Korea, one from Vietnam, one from Iran, and one from Nigeria. Among the international faculty, four are professors and five are associate professors. Almost all interviews were based on the same interview questions and were conducted within one hour. The participation of three international faculty was recommended by the division of international affairs at their universities. Six of them were directly contacted by the author.

Table 1 Outline of case studies

University	Location	Sector	Year of Establishment	Type	Interviewees
Kyusyu University	West	National	1911	Research	Associate Professor in social science from the UK
Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University	West	Private	2000	Teaching	Vice president of international affairs, one professor in social science from the USA, and one associate professor in science from Iran
Hiroshima University	Central	National	1949	Research	One associate professor in engineering from Vietnam, one professor in humanities from France
Aizu University	Northwest	Prefectural	1992	Teaching	Director of international affairs, one professor in science from China, one associate professor in humanities from Australia
Waseda University	Tokyo	Private	1902	Research	Vice president of international affairs, one professor in social science from Korea, and one associate professor in science from Africa

Source: Author (2016)

## Background and changes in international faculty

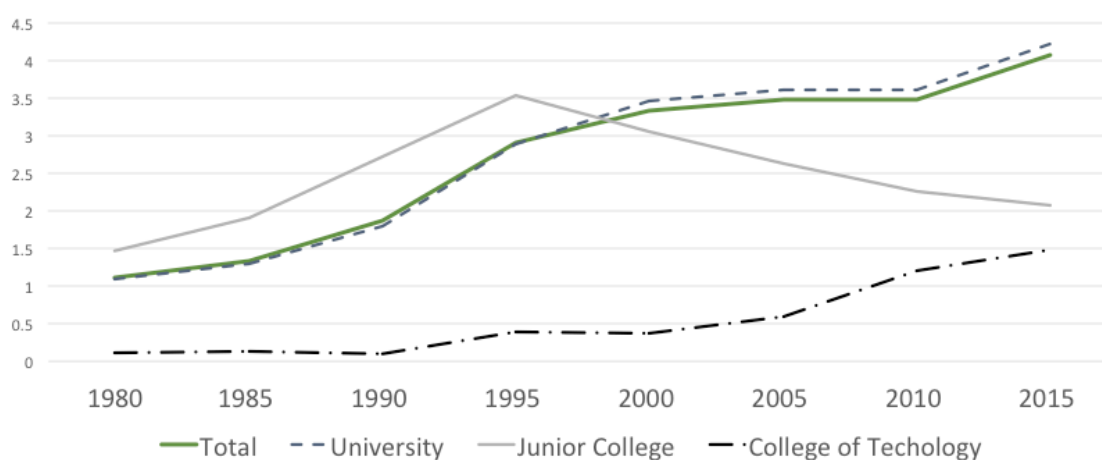
Contemporary Japanese higher education basically consists of three major types of institution: universities, junior colleges (*Tanki Daigaku* in Japanese), and colleges of technology.<sup>1</sup> As of 2016, there are 1,175 higher education institutions. By type, there are 777 universities, 341 junior colleges and 57 colleges of technology. By sector, the percentage of private universities and junior colleges is 77.2% and 95%, respectively. In terms of student enrolments, private institutions and junior colleges also represent the largest share of student enrolment in undergraduate universities, at 73.5% and 94.7%, respectively. The proportion of the private sector and private students constitute the biggest share of universities and junior colleges (MEXT, 2017).

The three different sectors within the systems are the national, local public or municipal/prefectural, and private sectors. The national and public sectors are mainly established, founded, and administered by national government and local authorities, respectively. The private sector is established and operated by school corporations and is largely dependent on tuition and fees. Given these characteristics, these three educational sectors are expected to play different roles and fulfil diverse functions. In particular, labour is clearly divided between the national and private sectors. Except for very few private universities with a long history, the majority of private sector institutions are involved in instructional activities in humanities and social sciences at an undergraduate level. They provide vocational and practical educational programmes. Local public universities, which are funded by local authorities, focus on the production of graduates for regional economic development and engage in service activities for the local community. By contrast, in addition to teaching activities, national universities are more engaged in basic, applied, and large-scale scientific research.

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<sup>1</sup> College of technology refers to a higher education institution that offers a unified five-year education (five years six months for mercantile marine studies) aimed at nurturing technical experts. It requires graduation from lower secondary schools or equivalent academic ability for admission. A minimum of 167 credits are required for graduation (147 credits for mercantile marine studies). Graduates are awarded the title of associate.

As previously mentioned, international faculty at Japanese universities and colleges have been steadily expanding since the 1950s. As shown in Figure 1, the percentage of full-time international faculty increased from 1% to 4% in 2015. Except for junior colleges, whose numbers and student enrolments have been rapidly declining since 1995, the proportion of international faculty in both universities and colleges of technology has continuously expanded. Furthermore, the largest percentage of international faculty is found in universities, followed by junior colleges and colleges of technology.

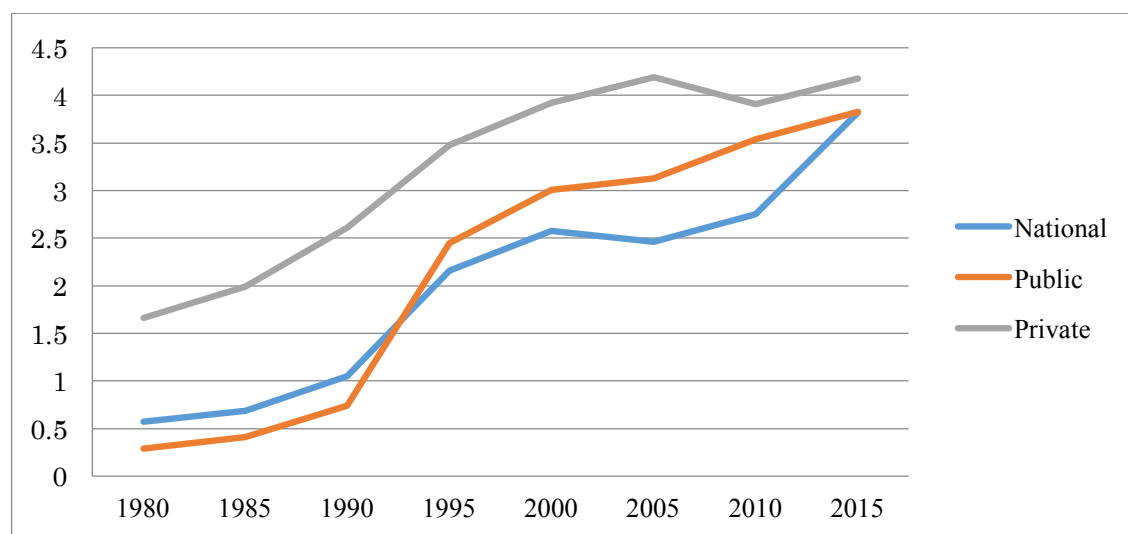


Source: MEXT (2016). *Statistical Abstract* 2016 edition (in Japanese). Tokyo: Japan.

Figure 1 Changes in the proportion of full-time international faculty by type of institutions (%)

Figure 2 shows that despite a periodic interruption of growth, the proportion of international faculty has steadily increased across the three sectors from 1980 to 2015. Private institutions accepted the largest proportion of international faculty, although the proportion of its international faculty has dropped since 2005. By the early 1990s, the proportion of international faculty at private institutions was lower than that of national universities. However, it exceeded that of national universities in 1995. Interestingly, the proportion of international faculty in national universities was the lowest among the sectors in 1995, but has grown since then. In 2015, the national sector employed the same proportion of international faculty as local public institutions.

Two main reasons are presented for this phenomenon. First, the corporatisation of national universities since April 2004 has enabled individual national university corporations to develop their own missions and distinctive strategies to improve their international competitiveness. One measure they adopted was to increase the proportion of international faculty. Second, demand for international faculty from English-speaking countries has been high because many national universities have been required to provide English-taught degree programmes.



Source: MEXT (2016). *Statistical Abstract* 2016 edition (in Japanese). Tokyo: Japan.

Figure 2 Changes in the proportion of full-time international faculty by sector (%)

Although the number of vice presidents with foreign nationalities from 1980 to 2015 increased from three to 18, there were only seven international presidents over this period. All of the international presidents worked in private institutions, 14 vice presidents were in private institutions, and only two vice presidents were in national and local public institutions.

Several driving forces at global or international, national, and institutional levels have contributed to the growth in the proportion of international faculty at Japanese universities and colleges. To illustrate, at a global or international level, since the late 1980s, the international mobility of academics, researchers, scientists, and university faculty has been more frequent. This increased frequency is due to the progress of economic globalisation, advancement of information technology, and diversifying

forms of internationalisation of higher education worldwide. Since the late 1990s, most OECD countries have developed strategies to compete worldwide for highly skilled workers (especially in the science, technology, and health care sectors) because of economic growth and growing concerns about ageing populations. Most countries have adopted flexible and favourable immigration policies to attract high-level academics, researchers, highly skilled workers, and/or former foreign students (OECD, 2004). Cross-border academic mobility is viewed as an effective way of providing qualified workers and academics from the perspective of host countries. At the same time, studying abroad and doing research in other countries can be part of a deliberate immigration strategy from the perspective of students and researchers (Tremblay, 2005). Other factors, such as the growing international competitiveness of higher education, a widening gap in R&D of higher education and research between different systems, and influence from global university ranking systems on building and restructuring national higher education systems, have all promoted the international mobility of university faculty and researchers.

At a national level, as early as 1982, the Japanese government promulgated *Special Measures Act for the Appointment of Foreign Staff at National and Public Universities*. This act is important because it allows international faculty to be hired in both national and local public universities as full-time academics, promoted to a higher academic rank, and even to become tenured professors in the two sectors. From the early 1990s, in response to new changes and challenges at global and international levels, the Japanese government has carried out a series of national-level projects. These projects aim to enhance the international competitiveness of Japanese higher education, foster university graduates with international competitiveness, and build approximately 30 world-class universities and world-class disciplines. Main projects include the Incorporation of National, Prefectural and Municipal Universities since 2004, the Global 30 Project in 2009, the English Education Reforms Plan Corresponding to Globalisation in 2013, the Developing Global Human Resource Project in 2004, and the Top Global University Project in 2014.

At an institutional level, a number of private institutions and local public institutions in Japan clearly claim that internationalisation is one of their most important missions since their establishment. For example, Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University (APU) emphasises that the objective of its education is to produce competent graduates with global and international perspectives and competencies. Based on this goal, almost half of its undergraduate programmes are delivered in English. Half of its faculty are international faculty (APU, 2017). Aizu University, a newly established local public university, has made efforts to attract first-class faculty members from almost 20 countries around the world and aims to produce computer scientists and highly-skilled computer engineers who will create and exploit knowledge for the new era (Aizu, 2017). Moreover, universities which were approved to be part of both the Global 30 Project and the Top Global University Project have formulated quantitative goals of education and research activities, including English-taught degree programmes, the proportion of international students and faculty, and even numbers of publications in indexed journals, etc. All these strategies and measures have stimulated a quick rise in numbers of international faculty at Japanese universities and colleges.

## **Research findings**

### **Demographic profiles of international faculty**

Figure 3 suggests that according to academic rank and sector, the largest number of professors were hired in private universities (708 persons) while the largest number of associate professors worked in national universities (570 persons). The largest number of lecturers and assistant professors were concentrated in private universities (445 persons) and national universities (472 persons), respectively.

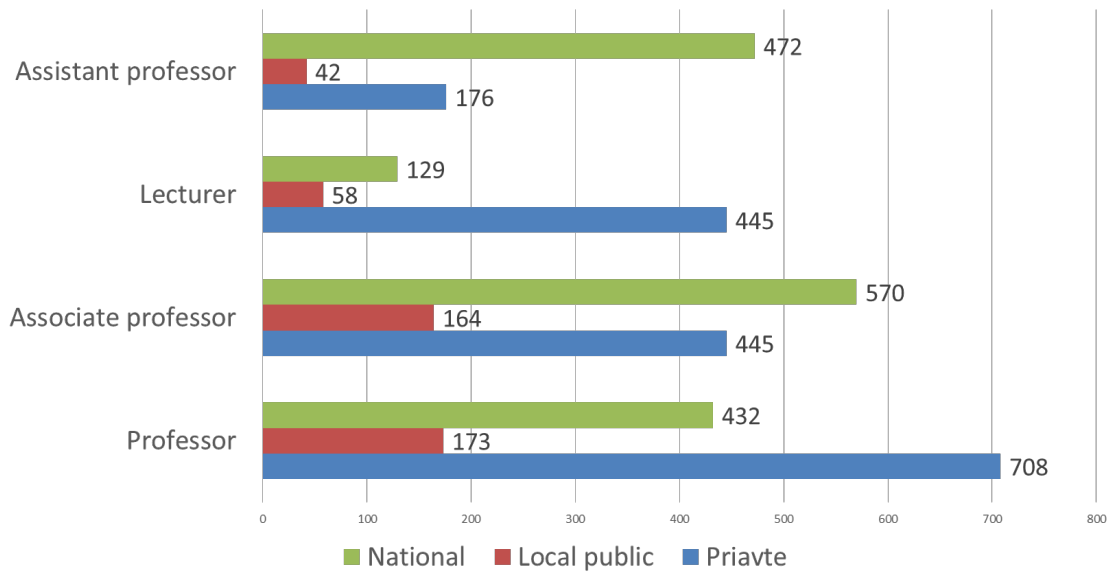


Figure 3 Distribution of international faculty by academic rank and sector

Figure 4 shows that the number of male international faculty is almost four times higher than that of the female international faculty. However, by sector, both the largest number of male and female international faculty were employed in private universities. Noticeably, over 60% of male faculty worked in private universities.

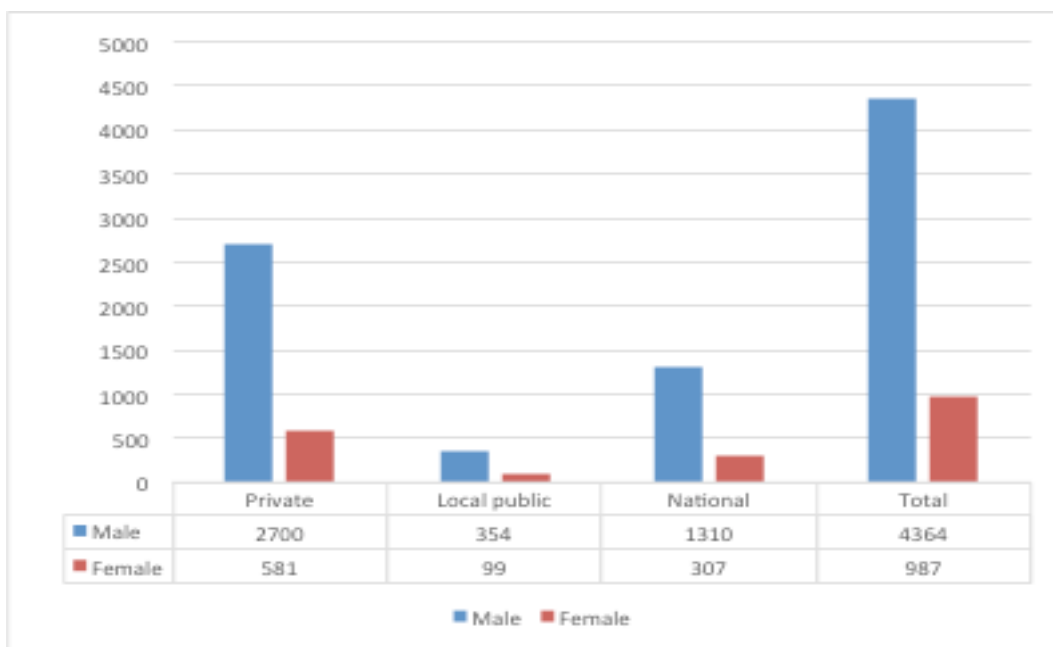


Figure 4 Distribution of international faculty by gender and sector

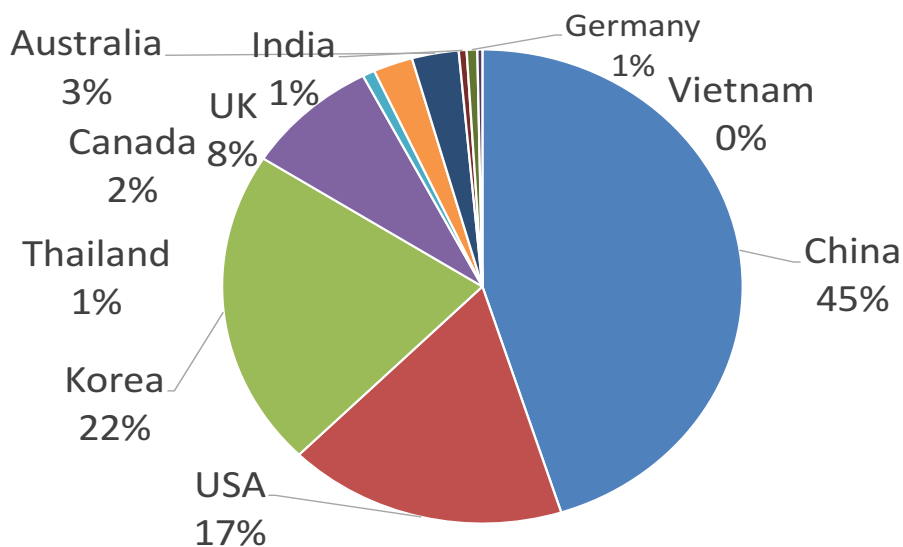


Figure 5 Distribution of international faculty by country of origin

Figure 5 indicates that by country of origin, the largest number of international faculty came from China (45%), followed by Korea (22%), the USA (17%), the UK (8%), Australia (3%), and so on. Both Chinese and Korean faculty accounted for nearly 70% of the total. The proportion of the international faculty coming from neighbouring countries or the same Chinese culture make up the largest body of international faculty at Japanese universities and colleges.

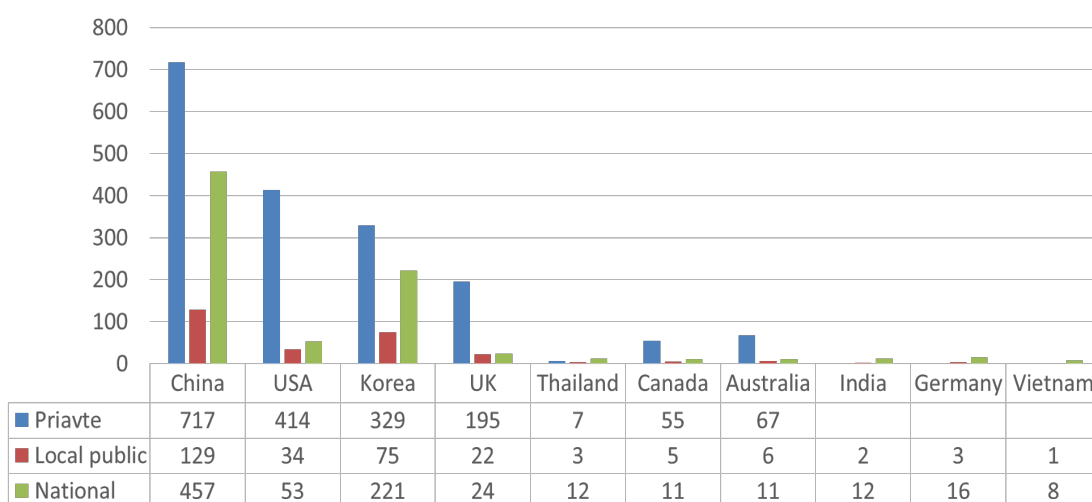


Figure 6 Distribution of international faculty by nationality and sector

Figure 6 shows that the largest number of Chinese faculty were hired in all three



sectors of universities and colleges, among which, the largest number of Chinese faculty were affiliated with private universities, followed by national universities and local public universities. Although the Korean faculty constituted the second largest body of the totals, their number in private universities was less than faculty from the USA. This is possibly because the USA faculty provided more language programmes than the Korean faculty did. Similarly, the largest number of faculty from other English-speaking countries, like the UK, Australia, and Canada, were also found in private universities.

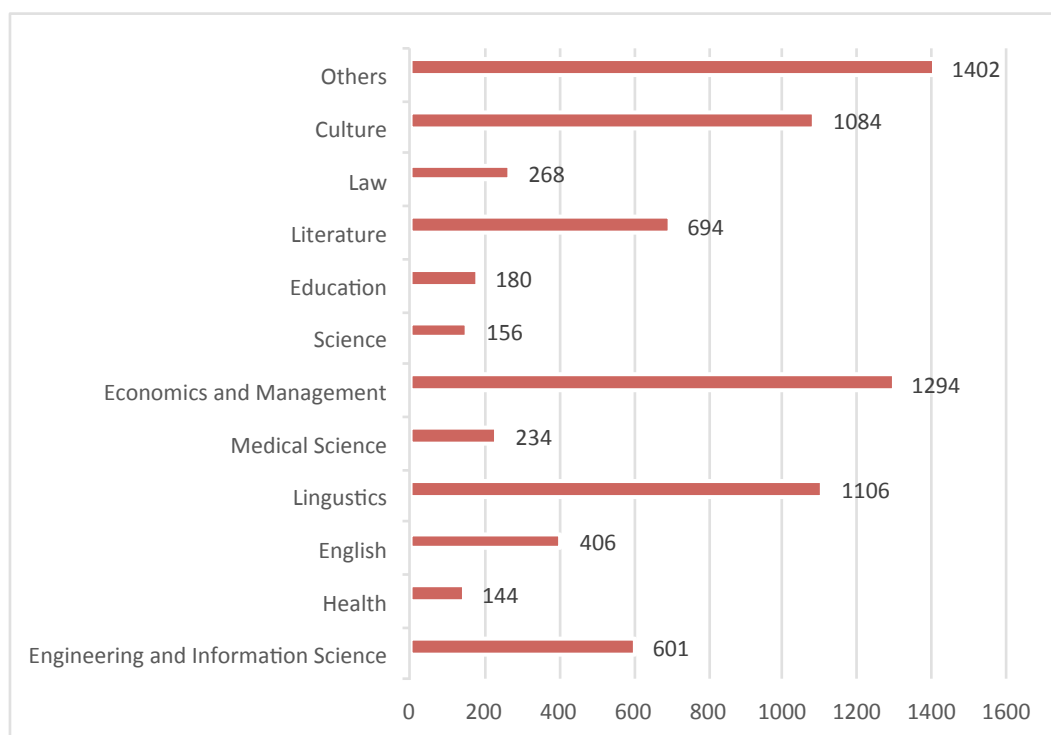


Figure 7 Distribution of international faculty by discipline

Regarding the distribution of international faculty by discipline (Figure 7), except for those from the category of Others (1,402 persons), the largest number of international faculty belonged to Economics and Management (1,294 persons), followed by those from Linguistics (1,106 persons), Culture (1,084 persons), Literature (694 persons), Engineering and Information Science (601 persons), and English (406 persons). More international faculty belonged to “soft sciences,” especially humanities and social science. Fewer faculty came from “hard sciences” such as engineering and information science, natural science, and medical science.

Table 2 Distribution of international faculty by discipline and sector

Discipline	Parivate	Local Public	National
Engineering	185	51	365
Health	62	10	72
English	169	34	203
<b>Linguistics</b>	495	58	553
Medicine	93	24	117
<b>Economics</b>	614	33	647
Science	60	18	78
Education	85	5	90
Literature	339	8	347
Law	128	6	134
<b>Culture</b>	487	55	542
<b>Others</b>	554	147	701
Total	3271	449	1613

By discipline and sector (Table 2), except for those categorised as Others, the largest number of international faculty from Economics were hired by both private universities (614 persons) and national universities (647 persons), followed by those from Linguistics in private universities (495 persons) and national universities (553 persons). By contrast, the largest number of international faculty from Linguistics worked in local public universities (58 persons), followed by those from Culture (55 persons), although their numbers are minimal.

Based on degree, 70% of international faculty were doctoral degree holders, 27% earned their master's degrees, and only 3% were bachelor's degree holders. Although they only provide language programmes, faculty are required to have a high academic credibility. By degree and sector, similar to other cases, the largest number of doctoral, master's, and bachelor's degree holders are concentrated in private universities, followed by those in national universities, and local public universities. This result is mainly because of the different sizes of the three different sectors of universities.

Data show that 56% of international faculty earned their degrees outside of Japan, whereas 44% of them obtained their degrees from Japanese universities. Based on the distribution of international faculty by country of earning degrees and levels (Figure 8), 822 international faculty earned their doctoral degrees from Japanese universities and 635 earned their doctoral degrees outside of Japan. However, more international faculty received their degrees outside of Japanese universities. That is, 1,129 international faculty earned their master's degrees outside of Japan, and 524 obtained their degrees from Japanese universities. As many as 1,131 international faculty received their bachelor's degrees outside of Japan, while only 116 were awarded with bachelor's degrees by Japanese universities. Thus, international students who graduated from Japanese universities with domestic degrees might have also provided one source of full-time international faculty at Japanese universities. Not all international faculty at Japanese universities and colleges have to be recruited directly from other countries or only depend on the immigration of faculty, researchers, or scientists outside of Japan.

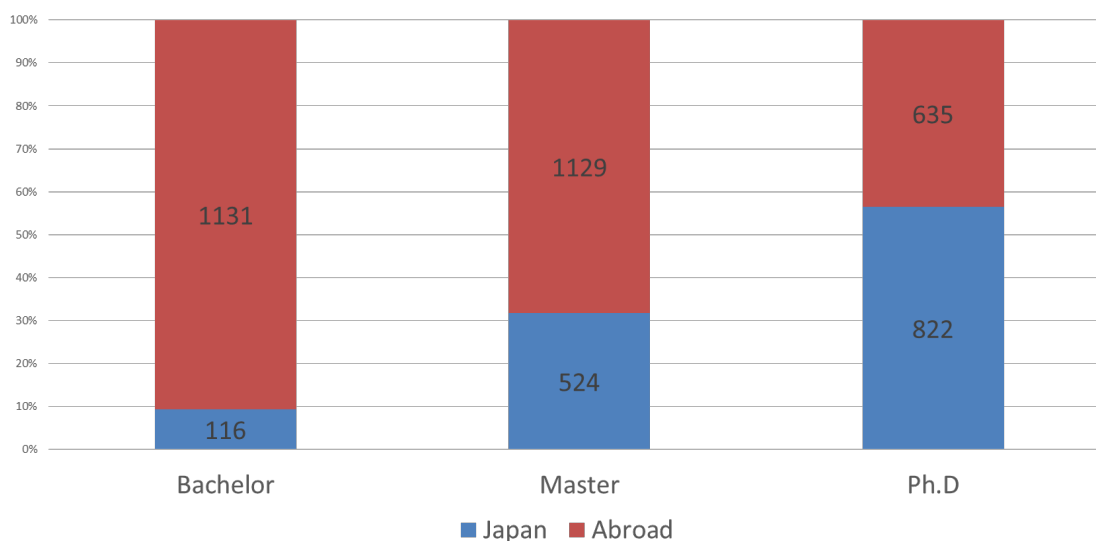


Figure 8 Distribution of international faculty members by country of earning degrees and levels

## **International faculty's motivations**

As discussed earlier, various drivers at global, international, national, and institutional levels have made a significant contribution to a steady and fast growth in numbers and proportion of full-time international faculty at Japanese universities and colleges. According to the “push-pull model”, an individual’s motivations also play a decisive role in moving from one country to another. Based on the earlier studies mentioned above, this study identified several main factors which might be closely concerned with faculty or researchers’ movement from home country to other country. They include: academic or professional reasons, fondness for Japanese life and culture, difficulty of finding employment in home country, better living conditions than home country, family reasons, political reasons, by chance, and ‘other’. In the interviews, the author normally began with a general question like “why did you come to work in a Japanese university?” While listening to interviewees’ responses, the author put questions, confirming their responses, or made comments on their answers by focusing on these main factors. It is true that in several cases, some interviewees emphasised that two or three factors are of almost the same importance in affecting their employment at Japanese universities. By rechecking and analysing the frequency they mentioned relevant words in relation to the eight factors listed above, this study explains the reasons the interviewees came to be hired by their Japanese institutions. Major findings from the interviews with international faculty in relation to their motivations provide clear evidence.

First, a huge number of interviewees claimed that they came to Japan and were hired in their current institutions for academic and professional reasons. This is true of almost all international faculty, regardless of their academic backgrounds, country of origin, gender, disciplines, or proficiency in Japanese. An American professor of English language and literature said:

As you may know, because of the bad economic situation in my country over the last decades, it was extremely difficult to obtain sufficient research funding to do research in my field. I have no complaint over giving lectures for undergraduate students in my home university, but I was worried about whether I could have communication with my colleges around the world if I

only put all my time and energy into teaching and could hardly get any funding to do research. Now, I have almost the same teaching load here, but at least I can be granted a sum of funding for my own research from my university every year if I fail in applying for a budget to the MEXT.

Similarly, a female associate professor from Iran also emphasised that:

I graduated from a Japanese university in Tokyo and applied for this position three years ago. I was deeply impressed by a good research environment in the university I studied and my advisor for his lot of funding he had in doing research when I was a doctoral student. I was asked to come back to my country many times, but to be honest, it will be more difficult for me to continue my academic activities in Iran as a female academic. I am very happy now because I can apply my research into my teaching and also do my research as I like here.

Second, more than half of the interviewees, including those from Western and Asian countries, admitted that they prefer to stay in Japan because they like the country and its culture. An Australian scholar said:

I began to be fond of Japanese culture when I was in junior middle school. I was married to a Japanese classmate when I was a university student. I enjoy my work and life here very much.

A Vietnamese faculty mentioned that:

Japan is an incredible country in modern science and technology. Also, it is a country of mixing both Asian and Western values of culture. It is a society of competition, but also full of respect and courtesy. I am not discriminated here just because I am a foreigner.

Third, quality of life and staying closer to one's spouse or family are also important factors for several international faculty. One Chinese professor asserted:

I can find a similarly good position in a relatively good university in Beijing or Shanghai since I received my bachelor, master's, and doctoral degrees in top universities in China and Japan. I am not worried about money or research funding if I go back to China. But as you know, I am more concerned with air pollution and unclean food, and the very complicated relationship between administrators and academics in Chinese universities. My wife is Japanese and she does not want to come with me back to China. This is also important.

Fourth, two international faculty mentioned the importance of esteem and self-actualisation when asked why they chose to work in Japan. One associate professor from the UK stated:

I am very respected here, although I am not old. I suppose that I am a symbol of internationalisation here. I teach English for undergraduate students and also teach Japanese professors how to write good English. I am involved in faculty development activities here. I take a great deal of pleasure from what I am doing here. I think it is just the kind of campus environment I want to work in.

Finally, the international faculty from the USA, France, and Australia emphasised that family reasons are also important reasons they determined to work in the Japanese universities, in comparison with those from other countries such as China, Korea, or Vietnam. Compared with the international faculty from any other regions, more international faculty from the USA, France, and Australia are married to Japanese nationals. By contrast, all the other international faculty's spouses came from the same countries.

## Concluding remarks

Compared to existing previous studies, this study has made original findings.

First, this study revealed that multiple factors at global, international, national, institutional, and individual levels have strongly affected the sharp increase in the number of full-time international faculty at Japanese universities, especially in the private sector.

Second, despite a rapid expansion, the share of full-time international faculty still accounts for less than 5% of the total. The academic market of Japanese academic professions is not as internationally open as that of Australia, North America or many European countries like the UK or the Netherlands.

Third, the study presents a more detailed description of personal, educational, and professional identities of the international faculty at Japanese universities and colleges. One new finding is that not all international faculty directly emigrated from their home countries or countries outside of Japan. Nearly 40% of international faculty were educated and trained in Japanese universities and colleges.

Fourth, the size and mission or function of Japanese universities and colleges have a direct influence on the acceptance of international faculty. For example, the largest number of international faculty were hired in private institutions and belong to humanities and social science.

Fifth, despite a rapid increase in the proportion of international faculty, there was no remarkable growth in the proportion of international faculty who were hired as institutional leaders, neither was there any striking rise in the proportion of female international faculty.

Finally, the study addressed why there has been a rapid rise in the proportion of international faculty since 1980.

More importantly, the study did not only review earlier studies or analyse government policies, institutional practice and strategies, but also identified the motivations of international faculty for choosing employment in Japanese universities based on interviews. The findings from the interviews reveal that academic and professional factors have most commonly driven faculty to move from their home countries to work in Japanese universities, followed by the attraction of Japanese culture, the pursuit of better living conditions and quality of life, and esteem and self-actualisation.

Implications of this study include the following aspects:

For research, new findings in the context of Japanese universities can contribute to the further development and review of the “push-pull model”. In addition to the push and pull factors of immigration, other theories or concepts, such as Maslow’s hierarchy of needs and social capital and social networks, should be considered when studying the international mobility of academics.

For policy, the Japanese government needs to provide more attractive policies and strategies and to open the academic market to international faculty, if internationalisation of higher education is to be achieved.

For practice, institutions should provide more favourable working conditions and form more appropriate supporting systems for international faculty, with a focus especially on employing more female international faculty.



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