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CONTENTS

Special Essay:

Technology Entrepreneurship: Japan's New Growth Engine?

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Introduction

Ever since I started doing research on Japanese companies more than 30 years ago, I have been strongly interested in the role of small and medium-sized companies (SMEs) in the Japanese economy. While Japanese business is globally most well-known through its highly competitive automobile and IT companies, SMEs constitute the backbone of the Japanese industrial system. In my doctoral dissertation research, I studied the division of labor between large manufacturers and their suppliers, and the highly sophisticated and differentiated patterns of collaboration between participants in Japanese supply chains (Hemmert, 1999). Subsequently, my research interest shifted to technology collaborations. Together with colleagues, I conducted studies on technology collaborations between companies as well as between companies and universities, and we learned that most such collaborations are conducted by SMEs. Furthermore, we found that similarly to industrial supply chains, technology collaboration outcomes in East Asian countries are mostly driven by the relationship quality between partners (Hemmert et al., 2014; Bstieler & Hemmert, 2015).

Regardless of the fact that most employment and value added in the Japanese and other East Asian economies falls to SMEs, the dominance of large manufacturing companies and conglomerates in global business and their strong control over suppliers featured as a fundamental and persistent characteristic of the industrial systems in these countries. Since the early 2010s, however, a change to these ostensibly stable fundamentals became discernible. Across East Asia, technology start-ups, understood as new, technology-based firms that are designed to grow (Storey & Tether, 1998), rapidly gained momentum. While such firms always existed, they played a relatively marginal role in East Asia before, as in contrast to the USA and some other Western countries, top talent and investment funds gravitated to large manufacturing firms and conglomerates. Therefore, it was remarkable and exciting to see that technology start-ups now play a larger role in East

Asian countries. Together with colleagues, I therefore set up a research group to study technology start-ups across Japan, South Korea (hereafter: Korea) and China and understand how they develop and which challenges they face. In this essay, I would like to share some of our key observations and findings.

The Growth of Technology Start-ups in East Asia

The number of technology start-ups has grown strongly in East Asia since the early 2010s. Most of these start-ups focus on IT solutions in areas such as e-commerce and the mobile internet, and have clustered in megacities. In 2016, there were an estimated 24,000 technology start-ups in Beijing and 5,000 each in Tokyo and Seoul, compared with 15,000 in Silicon Valley (Hemmert et al., 2019). These numbers are impressive, as they show that leading East Asian start-up ecosystems have grown quickly to a comparable size with the world's leading start-up cluster. As regards the growth of individual start-ups, however, East Asian countries are still clearly lagging behind the USA. At the beginning of 2024, there were 169 unicorns (start-ups with a market valuation of more than US$ 1 billion) in China, 14 in Korea and 6 in Japan, compared with 653 in the USA (World Population Review, 2024). Thereby, China, Korea and Japan are globally ranked 2nd, 10th and 20th, respectively, in terms of the number of unicorns.

Another angle to assess technology entrepreneurship across different locations is the relative evaluation of start-up ecosystems, which are also referred to as entrepreneurial ecosystems and can be understood as sets of interdependent actors and factors that enable productive entrepreneurship within a specific region or location (Stam, 2015). Based on a wide range of criteria, the start-up ecosystems of Beijing, Shanghai, Seoul and Tokyo have been globally ranked 7th, 9th, 12th and 15th among 290 ecosystems in 2023 (Startup Genome, 2024).

Overall, these observations suggest that technology entrepreneurship in East Asia has strongly grown and become globally prominent in recent years. Most East Asian start-up activity is concentrated on the largest cities in the region. Furthermore, within East Asia, start-up entrepreneurship appears to be most dynamic in China, followed by Korea and Japan.

Driving Forces of Start-up Growth

It is apparent that technology entrepreneurship has become a major economic force in East Asia in recent years. At the same time, this development is surprising when considering the long-term dominance of large manufacturing firms and conglomerates in this region. Thus, the question emerges what has caused the rapid growth of start-up ecosystems in East Asia.

Some factors behind the recent start-up boom appear to be global. Rapid technological progress in information and communication technologies has dramatically lowered entry barriers for technology start-ups. These days, it is conceivable to start up a new company with only a promising business idea, a few individuals and a few computers in a small office space, or even working from home, and reach a large number of potential customers for newly developed digital services across the globe via bits and bytes. Furthermore, the volume of venture capital available to finance the growth of start-ups has increased multifold since the turn of the millennium. However, these factors do not explain why technology entrepreneurship in East Asia has not only increased absolutely, but also relatively compared with other parts of the world, as shown in global rankings.

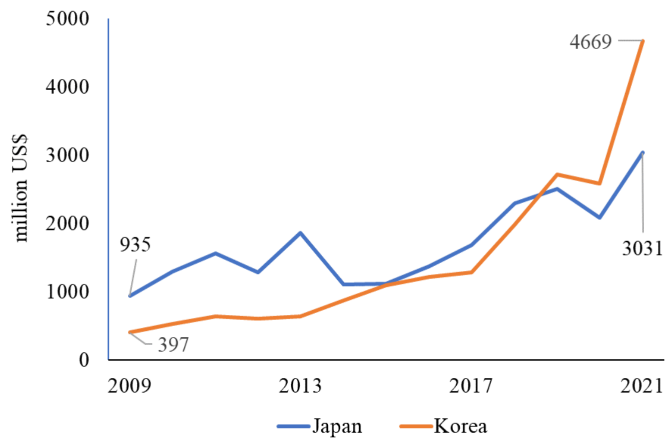
To understand what happened in East Asia, let us consider what is fundamentally needed for a start-up to be successful: (1) skilled founders who have promising new business ideas and are willing to start up a new technology company; (2) capable technical and managerial talent that is motivated to join start-ups; (3) investors who are willing to finance start-ups, particularly when substantial investment capital is needed for scaling up; and (4) early customers who are willing to buy the products or services by a new company. On all four counts, start-ups in East Asia faced an uphill battle until the 2000s. Though there was an abundance of skilled professionals with deep technological knowledge and valuable business ideas, few among them were motivated to start up a new company. Similarly, most high-end technical and managerial talent flocked to large conglomerates and the public sector and was not interested in joining start-ups. Venture capital markets were underdeveloped and most investors and financial institutions were not keen on investing into start-ups with a highly uncertain future. Finally, established companies were mostly relying on the inhouse development of new products and technologies and did not work with start-ups, while most potential private customers were also not using the products and services offered by start-ups, as few among were aware of these offerings.

In the last 15 years, the business environment has improved markedly in all these aspects for technology start-ups in East Asia.

“Why have the conditions for obtaining key resources and customers improved so markedly for technology start-ups in East Asia?

More start-ups are founded, as more individuals are motivated to become technology entrepreneurs. Moreover, the number of skilled young professionals willing to work for start-ups has increased. The amount of venture capital has also grown. As shown in Figure 1, venture capital investment expanded more than threefold in Japan between 2009 and 2021, while it increased more than tenfold in Korea during the same period. Finally, a much higher number of individuals is now aware of the products and services provided by start-ups and uses them, while the number of established companies willing to collaborate with start-ups and become their early customers has also gradually increased.

Figure 1 Venture capital investment in Japan and Korea



Source: OECD (2024).

Why have the conditions for obtaining key resources and customers improved so markedly for technology start-ups in East Asia? Start-up support policies have been one major supporting factor. In Japan, Korea and China, the promotion of high-technology entrepreneurship became a strong policy priority. In all three countries, national policy programs include financial support policies, including direct funding and loan support programs for start-ups and indirect funding support by the augmentation of “fund-of-funds” for venture capital investment. Furthermore, a wide array of other start-up support measures, including entrepreneurship education and information-sharing programs, the organization of entrepreneurship and networking-related events, and support for the creation of incubators has been rolled out (Hemmert et al., 2019). While many governments across the world have supported technology entrepreneurship in recent years, the policy shift towards start-up support has been particularly strong in East Asia, arguably as a potential means to diversify economies away from large manufacturing firms and conglomerates.

Furthermore, technology entrepreneurship policies in East Asian countries have also improved the business conditions for start-ups indirectly through the public dissemination of policy goals and priorities. East Asian governments do not only support start-ups through funding programs and other policy measures, but also communicate to the public that technology entrepreneurship has a bright future. Such public communication matters because it helps changing prevalent negative views about start-ups. Potential technology entrepreneurs and technical and managerial talent have previously been discouraged from founding or joining start-ups not only for economic, but also for cultural reasons. It used to be much more prestigious to work for a large company than for an unknown start-up. While this social preference has not been unique to East Asia, it has been particularly strong in this region. Confucian values provide parents with strong influence over the professional choices of their offspring, and parents' preferences for their children's employment in large companies which presumably offer safe jobs and social prestige have been strong. Persistent official communication that start-ups have good prospects arguably has helped with growing technology entrepreneurship, as such communication has resulted in more positive views of technology start-ups not only among young professionals, but also their parents.

Another factor that has supported the growth of technology entrepreneurship in East Asia is the tech-savviness of consumers in this region. The advent of the smartphone has enabled technology start-ups to connect with users of their applications much more directly and effectively than in the past, resulting in more opportunities to secure early customers. This trend has been particularly strong in major East Asian cities, where smartphone users tend to be highly sophisticated and keen to use new digital services (Hemmert et al., 2019).

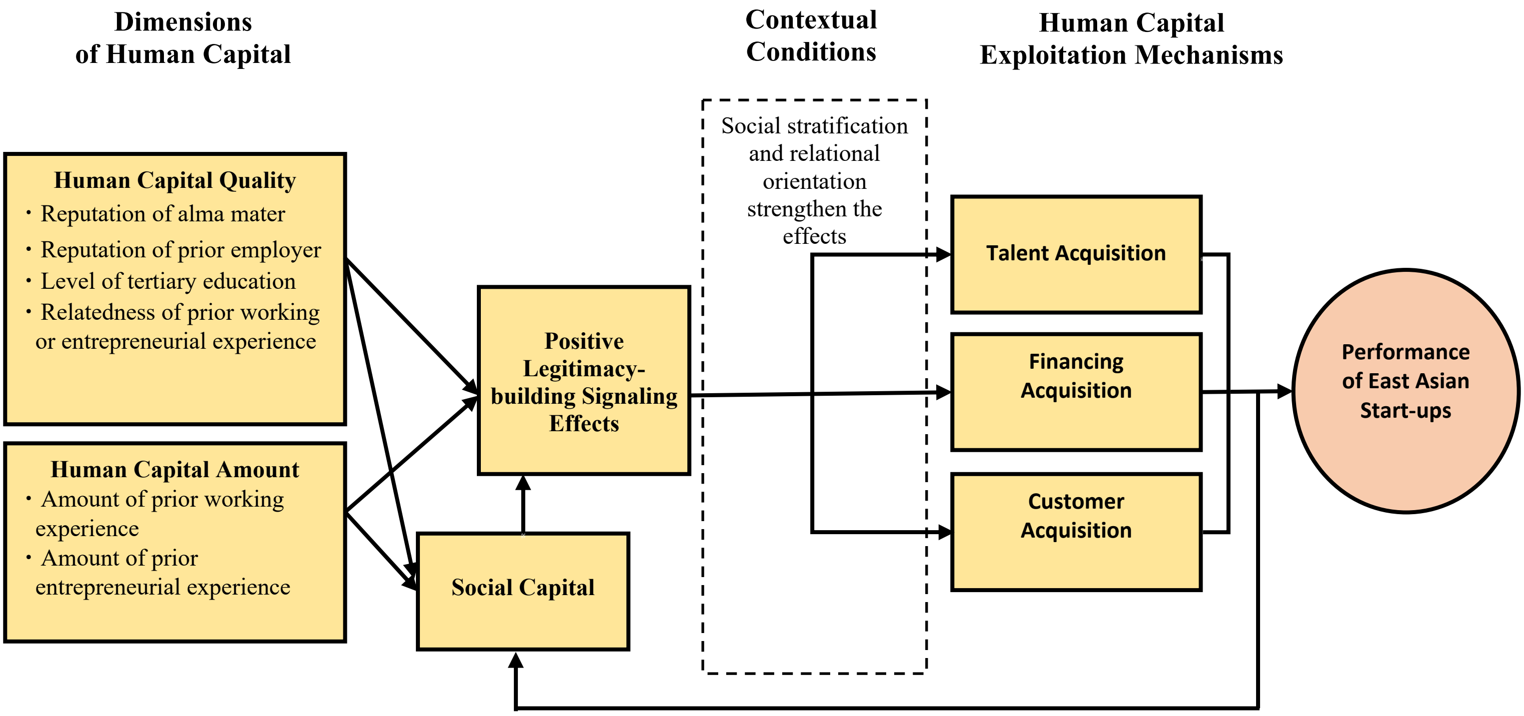
Challenges for Technology Start-ups in East Asia

While technology entrepreneurship in Japan, Korea and China has been strongly growing in recent years, start-ups in these countries are nonetheless facing some major challenges, which are partially rooted in cultural and economic background factors. One challenging aspect for many East Asian technology entrepreneurs that our research group has identified is the need to establish personal legitimacy in order to attract talent, investors and customers (Hemmert et al., 2022).

Confucian values in East Asian countries place a high value on human capital (skills acquired via education and practical experience). Moreover, business communities in these countries are relatively stratified. This means that in order to be perceived as legitimate, technology entrepreneurs need not only to be highly educated and experienced, but should also have graduated from prestigious universities or worked for major companies. The importance of the face value of first-tier universities and companies is reinforced through the networks which individuals build throughout their higher education and professional careers. In other words, when a start-up entrepreneur has graduated from a famous university or worked for a well-known company, former classmates and colleagues can effectively help the entrepreneur with securing talent, investors and customers. Conversely, even highly educated and experienced entrepreneurs tend to struggle with attracting skilled talent and major investments and customers unless they have such a "first-tier background." In short, not only the amount, but also the quality of entrepreneurs' human capital strongly influences the chances of resource and customer acquisition, which in turn determine entrepreneurial success. Furthermore, the entrepreneurs' human capital is built and leveraged in tandem with their social capital – networks of relationships with other individuals (Figure 2).

Furthermore, successful internationalization constitutes another major challenge for East Asian start-ups. Generally speaking, technological progress

Figure 2 Human capital dimensions, contextual conditions, exploitation mechanisms and start-up entrepreneurship outcomes in East Asia



Source: Hemmert et al. (2022, p.16)

has not only lowered entry barriers for start-ups in general, but also has lowered cross-border market entry barriers. In the global digital space, it is now much easier for start-ups to connect with overseas customers than in the past. As a result, there are now numerous "born globals" – entrepreneurial start-ups that, from or near their founding, seek to derive a substantial proportion of their revenue from the sale of products in international markets (Knight & Cavusgil, 2004). However, while many Japanese, Korean and Chinese technology start-ups have been generally quite successful, relatively few of these companies have successfully expanded to global markets (Hemmert & Kim, 2021; Kapturkiewicz, 2022). This observation is remarkable in view of the generally strong export performance of Japanese, Korean and Chinese firms over the last decades.

> *"Specifically, policy can enhance the international connectivity of start-up ecosystems by promoting international exchange and attracting foreign entrepreneurial talent through supportive immigration policies*

Many East Asian start-ups are not motivated to expand to foreign markets, as they find that their domestic markets are sufficiently large and attractive. However, in our studies we have also found that even those companies that are committed to internationalization often struggle to establish a stable customer base on foreign markets. A key reason for this relative lack of success is an insufficient understanding of the needs of overseas customers. Japan, Korea and China have all strongly distinct business systems (Hasegawa & Witt, 2019). As a result, there are major adaptation costs when products, services and business models which have been developed for domestic customers are taken to overseas markets (Hemmert & Kim, 2021).

Successful born globals tend to develop products and business models that can be easily rolled out internationally from the outset (Hennart, 2014). However, East Asian start-ups rarely apply this strategy and first develop products for domestic customers instead, resulting in major hurdles when trying to expand internationally later on. The low prevalence of a born-global approach in business and product development in East Asia is partially the result of the scarcity of foreign technology entrepreneurs in Japan, Korea and China. In a major survey of almost 3,000 technology start-ups across the three countries, we found that less than 1% of all start-up founders have been foreign nationals. There are also relatively few core management team members with a foreign background in East Asian start-ups. This situation strongly contrasts with some major Western start-up ecosystems, where approximately half of all start-up founders are immigrants (Startup Migrants, 2020). As most technology start-ups in East Asia lack an international perspective in their founding teams, they find it difficult to develop products and business models that can be easily rolled out internationally.

Implications for Policymakers and Entrepreneurs

While entrepreneurship promotion policies in East Asian countries have been highly effective in growing major start-up ecosystems over the last two decades, it would be helpful to update these policies, as many ecosystems are maturing. It may be more effective now to focus support on high-potential start-ups instead of providing relatively untargeted subsidies for a large number of new firms. Furthermore, in relatively mature start-up ecosystems that are increasingly relying on private capital, improvements in the general business environment and in the global connectivity of start-up ecosystems may be more effective than providing direct support for start-ups (Brown & Mawson, 2019). Specifically, policy can enhance the international connectivity of start-up ecosystems by promoting international exchange and attracting foreign entrepreneurial talent through supportive immigration policies.

Start-up entrepreneurs in East Asian countries can substantially increase their odds of success by first building up strong expertise through higher education and professional experience, which strengthens their legitimacy. Furthermore, as the prestige of universities and former employers is quite important for the ease of acquiring resources and customers, founders who have not graduated from leading universities or worked for well-known companies may at an early stage of their venture identify and attract co-founders who have such a background to facilitate access to valuable resources.

Furthermore, start-up entrepreneurs who are interested in international expansion should from the outset focus on developing products and business models that can be rolled out on international markets relatively easy. The expertise in identifying such business opportunities can be strengthened by attracting co-founders or core management team members who are immigrants or have extensive international experience.

Overall, it seems that within East Asia, technology entrepreneurship has evolved more dynamically in China and Korea than in Japan. The relatively slower growth of start-up ecosystems in Japan may be related to demographic and cultural factors. The number of young professionals is diminishing, and Japan appears to have the most risk-averse business culture among the three countries. Nonetheless, Japan can reinforce the positive trend towards more vibrant technology entrepreneurship by leveraging its own strengths. For example, major Japanese cities are increasingly seen as highly attractive places to work and live in from a global perspective. Technology entrepreneurship in Japan may be reinvigorated by attracting first-rate global talent more actively. If technological, cultural and policy changes continue to be supportive, technology entrepreneurship may become a major growth engine for the Japanese economy in the future.

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Special Essay:

Global "Jinzai" Development in Japanese Universities: The Case of University of Hyogo

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Introduction

I was the Dean of the School of Economics and Management at the University of Hyogo for four years, from April 2019 to March 2023. This faculty has many features, but the most prominent one is the Global Business Course (hereafter referred to as GBC). The GBC admits 50 Japanese students (Japanese high school graduates, to be precise) in April and 30 international students (non-Japanese and dual nationality students who graduated from high schools abroad) in September, providing education in economics and business administration, and conferring a bachelor's degree in economics. Students enrolled in April 2019 graduated in March 2023 after four years of study. Students enrolled in September 2019 graduated in September 2023. In other words, GBC, which we founded, is finally in the process of graduating its first batch of graduates. In this essay, I will review the educational activities at GBC over the past four and a half years and clarify that the challenge for global human resources education at Japanese universities is to bring global human resources back to the regions where they were trained.

Toward this challenge, I proceed in the following order. First, the concept of global human resources in Japan will be explained. The concept of global human resources in Japan is considered to be the abilities that Japanese people should possess to work in a global work environment. Second, the case of the University of Hyogo will be presented. After explaining the background of the establishment of the former Hyogo Prefectural Kobe Higher Commercial School and its location, the GBC established at the University of Hyogo's School of Economics & Management will be explained. Third, the gap that has emerged in the training of global human resources in Japan will be discussed. Finally, I will conclude by presenting the structure required for global human resource development at Japanese universities, which can be gleaned from the discussion of this gap, and the need for further research.

> "*I will clarify that the challenge for global human resources education at Japanese universities is to bring global human resources back to the regions where they were trained.*

Concept of Global Human Resources in Japan

Prior to the various discussions in this section, it is important to confirm what is meant by the concept of "global human resources" in Japan. In the first part of this essay, I used the term global human resources. This is a literal translation of the Japanese word jinzai. In fact, it is not a perfect match for the English translation of global jinzai[1]. The Japanese word jinzai implies a person who has the ability and mindset to work globally. In line with this sense of the word, looking back at previous studies, it can be said that the study of global leaders and global talent is the study of global jinzai in Japan. Even with this correspondence, the study of global jinzai is not necessarily monolithic. Mendenhall, et al. (2012) point out that a common understanding of its definition has not been formed in the study of global leadership (A similar point is also made by Pless et al. (2011)). Therefore, there is no fixed definition of global jinzai either. However, several studies have shown the characteristics of human resources who can thrive in a global environment[2]. From the study of global organizational behavior, the discussion of the qualities of an effective manager in a multicultural environment presented by Adler and Bartholomew (1992) is the groundwork for many studies. Then, Caligiuri's (2006) discussion identified the knowledge, skills, abilities, and personalities that global leaders need in terms of the tasks required of them. Subsequently, Caligiuri and Tarique (2012) attempted to measure the effectiveness of global leadership; the elements of global leadership presented by Caligiuri (2006) were also cited in. In this essay, we will elaborate on the characteristics Caligiuri (2006) indicated a global leader should possess.

Caligiuri's (2006) discussion presents 10 tasks specific to global leaders, drawn from group meetings and surveys of leaders actually working in global companies in Europe and North America. The 10 tasks are as follows:

① Global leaders work with colleagues from other countries.

② Global leaders interact with external clients from other countries.

③ Global leaders interact with internal clients from other countries.

④ Global leaders may need to speak in a language other than their mother tongue at work.

⑤ Global leaders supervise employees who are of different nationalities.

⑥ Global leaders develop a strategic business plan on a worldwide basis for their unit.

⑦ Global leaders manage a budget on a worldwide basis for their unit.

⑧ Global leaders negotiate in other countries or with people from other countries.

⑨ Global leaders manage foreign suppliers or vendors.

⑩ Global leaders manage risk on a worldwide basis for their unit.

Caligiuri (2006) states that global leaders require the following competencies to perform the above ten tasks (pp. 221-222).

① Knowledge

・*Culture-general knowledge*：Culture general knowledge is defined as knowledge of the societal-level values and norms on which most cultures vary. That is, the extent of understanding of a given country's culture is the level of one's culture specific knowledge.

・*International business knowledge*：International business knowledge is the topic-specific knowledge related to conducting business globally. That is, the extent of one's expertise in international business is the level of one's international business knowledge.

[1] Based on materials provided by J. E. Olsen at a workshop day for MEXT's Global Human Resource Development Promotion Project in 2012（https://www.doshisha.ac.jp/attach/page/OFFICIAL-PAGE-JA-1622/37661/file/7.pdf: final access, 2023/11/13）. In this essay, I will also use the Japanese word jinzai. Its meaning is someone who can work effectively in a global work or work environment, as will be described in detail in the main text.

[2] The discussion here is based on Olsen's ideas mentioned above. Taking as a starting point the question he posed of whether there is a need to unify the differences between Japan's own definition of global jinzai and the academic definition, I am attempting to clarify the image of global jinzai that is sought after in Japanese society.

② Skills and abilities

・*Intercultural Interaction Skills*: Skills such as foreign negotiating skills or cross-national conflict resolution comprise intercultural interaction skills. These skills can improve over time as one learns the way in which cultural nuances affect their interactions with people from different cultures.

・*Foreign Language Skills*: Skill in a given foreign language can increase to some level of fluency with practice (for some much more practice than others) but may be limited by abilities such as hearing sensitivity, speech recognition, and memory.

・*Cognitive Ability*: To be effective globally, individuals must possess cognitive complexity and intuitive perceptual acuity to accurately perceive and interpret behaviors across multiple cultural contexts.

③ Personality characteristics

These five factors have been found repeatedly through factor analyses and confirmatory factor analyses across, time, contexts, and cultures and are labeled "the Big Five." The Big Five personality factors are: extroversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional stability, and openness or intellect.

・*Extroversion*: Many of the global leadership tasks have a social component (e.g., working with colleagues from other countries, supervising employees who are of different nationalities).

・*Agreeableness*: Leaders who are more agreeable (i.e., deal with conflict collaboratively, strive for mutual understanding, and are less competitive) report greater cross-cultural adjustment and are likely to have greater success on global leadership tasks involving collaboration.

・*Conscientiousness*: Individuals who are conscientious demonstrate greater effort and task commitment. Given the higher level of complexity, global leadership tasks (e.g., managing foreign suppliers or vendors) will likely require more effort than comparable tasks in the domestic context.

・*Emotional stability*: Emotional stability is a universal adaptive mechanism enabling humans to cope with stress in their environment. Given that stress is often associated with leadership in ambiguous and unfamiliar environment emotional stability is an important personality characteristic.

・*Openness or intellect*: For a global leader, the ability to correctly assess the social environment is more complicated given that the global context provides ambiguous or uninterpretable social cues.

Global jinzai is discussed in international research papers as a capability that global leaders are expected to possess.

On the other hand, how is global jinzai defined in Japan? In Japan, the ability to work in a global workplace was not so much identified as research, but rather the government backed up the private sector's request for human resource development in order to strengthen Japan's competitiveness (Fukagawa, 2012; Yoshida, 2014). As a result, one of the goals of training the human resources that universities are responsible for has become the training of global jinzai[3]. To this end, the definition of global jinzai in Japan was discussed at a Japanese government council, and the results of its deliberations were published in the form of a report. The best known definition of global human resources by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) is the 2011 "Interim Summary" of the Council for the Promotion of Global Human Resource Development[4].

> "The concept of "global jinzai" that Japan should develop and utilize in the globalized world economy and society in the future is generally considered to include the following elements.
>
> Element I: language and communication skills
>
> Element II: Initiative and proactivity, challenging spirit, cooperativeness

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[3] Yoshida (2014) clarifies the process of convergence of global human resources in Japan.

[4] This definition is based on the following website.
https://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/shingi/chousa/koutou/46/siryo/__icsFiles/afieldfile/2011/08/09/1309212_07_1.pdf（final access: 2023/11/13)

and flexibility, sense of responsibility and sense of mission

Element III: Understanding of different cultures and Japanese identity

In addition to the above, other qualities commonly required of not only "global Jinzai" but also those who will support the core of society in the future include a broad range of liberal arts and deep expertise, the ability to identify and solve problems, teamwork and leadership (bringing together groups of heterogeneous people), a sense of publicity and ethics, and media literacy, and so on."

In its 2017 evaluation recommendations for MEXT's policy, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications defines global jianzi as follows[5].

> "Human resources who can play an active role in various fields by acquiring rich language and communication skills, initiative and proactivity, and a spirit of cross-cultural understanding, based on a deep understanding of Japanese identity and Japanese culture."

As described above, the attempt to define global jinzai in Japan has proceeded as the Japanese government responds to the challenge of fostering global jinzai, and in the process, a definition has been made. Let us compare the Japanese definition of global jinzai with the definition proposed in academic discussions (see Table 1). Comparing the requirements for global leader, the Japanese definition of global jinzai shares similarities with academic discussions in terms of knowledge, skills and abilities, and suitable personality. The major difference is that the Japanese definition of global jinzai requires global jinzai to identify themselves as Japanese. This reflects the location-specific nature of training global jinzai in Japan. We will discuss in the next section and beyond that this identity item is a key point in the training of global jinzai at Japanese universities.

The Case of the University of Hyogo

Before discussing the gap in global jinzai training at Japanese universities, we will briefly introduce the Global Business Course (GBC) established at the University of Hyogo's School of Economics & Management as a case study.

(1) Public university in a rural area

The University of Hyogo was founded in 1929 as Hyogo Prefectural Kobe Higher Commercial School. Since its establishment, it has been an institution of higher education in Hyogo Prefecture[6]. Kobe City, where the University of Hyogo is located, is a city that has developed along with overseas trade[7]. A record of the development of Owada Tomari appears in 821.

Until the mid-1400s, Hyogo was the center of Japan's trade with China. In 1603, Japan became the seat of the Edo shogunate, the government of the Tokugawa family. Under the policy of the Edo Shogunate, Japan as a whole adopted a policy of seclusion. Negotiations with the U.S. led to the establishment of the Port of Kobe east of Hyogo-tsu due to problems with the hinterland, and the Port of Kobe was opened in 1868. Shortly thereafter, a political upheaval brought about the end of the Edo shogunate and the start of direct rule by the emperor. 1868 onward, the port of Kobe was developed and Kobe became the western hub of Japan's overseas trade (Kobe became a trading port for Osaka and the rest of the Kansai region).

After 1868, Kobe became a hub for overseas trade and international business. In 1878, following the plan of Hyogo prefectural governor Masazumi Morioka, the Kobe Institute of Commerce (now Hyogo Prefectural Kobe Commercial High School) was

[5] The MIC definition is presented in the MIC's "Policy Assessment on the Promotion of Global Human Resource Development - Recommendations Based on the Assessment Results -" published in 2017(https://www.soumu.go.jp/main_content/000496468.pdf：final access 2023/11/13).
[6] The history of the establishment of national Kobe University of Commerce is based on the Fifty-Year History Compilation Committee of Kobe University of Commerce (1979).
[7] The history of the establishment of the Port of Kobe is based on the following website of the City of Kobe. https://www.city.kobe.lg.jp/culture/modern_history/archive/detail/history_01.html#year_1868 (final access, 2023/11/13）

Table 1 Comparison of elements required for global jinzai

	Academic Definitions	Japanese Definitions
Knowledge	・General knowledge (knowledge of different cultures) ・Knowledge of international business	・Broad knowledge ・Understanding of different cultures ・In-depth expertise
skills and abilities	・Skills to operate in a cross-cultural environment ・Foreign language skills ・Ability to recognize problems in a multicultural environment	・Language skills ・Communication skills ・Problem identification and problem-solving skills, ・Teamwork and leadership (bringing together groups of heterogeneous people) ・Media literacy, etc.
Suitable personality	・Extroversion ・Agreeableness ・Extraversion ・Agreeableness ・Conscientiousness ・Emotional stability ・Openness or Intellect	・Initiative and proactivity ・Challenging spirit ・Cooperativeness, Flexibility ・Sense of responsibility ・Sense of mission ・Publicness or Ethics,
Identity	—	Identity as Japanese

Source: The author summarizes the discussion in this section

established to provide business-related education. It was the second business education institution in Japan, after Tokyo[8]. This led to the establishment of the National Kobe Higher Commercial School (now Kobe University) in 1903. It was decided that the National Kobe Higher Commercial School would be upgraded to national Kobe University of Commerce in 1929. Accordingly, it was decided to establish Hyogo Prefectural Kobe Higher Commercial School (now University of Hyogo, and hereinafter called Kobe High Commerce) again as a prefectural institution, and it was established in 1929. Thus, along with the development of the Port of Kobe, an educational institution was established in Kobe to foster human resources for international business.

The first principal of Kobe High Commerce was Masao Ito, who set forth the following three educational policies for Kobe High Commerce[9].

① Focus on trade and economics.
② Cultivate academic ability and skills to respond immediately to the real needs of society.
③ Cultivate an autonomous spirit.

In particular, I would like to address Ito's educational emphasis on trade as it relates to the current discussion. In addition to the focus on trade and economics in his seminar education, Ito established the Trade Research Office (now the Institute for Policy Science) in 1934. The Trade Research Office was intended to conduct research and analysis on international economic issues. Differentiating itself from the national Kobe University of Commerce (now Kobe University), the laboratory emphasized theory and, taking advantage of the geographical location of Kobe, tried to make the analysis of trade with foreign countries a pillar of Kobe

[8] The description of the establishment of business educational institutions in Kobe here is based on the following websites. https://www.shinshoudousoukai.com/history/ (final access, 2023/11/13）.

[9] The educational policy indicated by Ito is based on Matsuyama (2021). In addition, the description of the early education and research of the prefectural Kobe High Commerce written here is based on Matsuyama (2021).

High Commerce's research. Ito also established a system of overseas research for faculty members and was keen to have them gain international experience. He focused on teaching language skills, and in relation to English education, three foreign teachers were assigned along with one Japanese teacher. German was taught by two Japanese teachers, while French and Chinese were taught by one Japanese and one foreign teacher. What is now known as "native speaker" language education was provided. In addition, Ito's educational philosophy was to nurture smart, gentleman-like citizens. These words indicate that Ito wanted his students to improve their liberal arts and interpersonal skills through education at Kobe High Commerce.

Kobe High Commerce's social reputation did not shake out in the measure of employment of its graduates[10]. The employment rate for students who graduated in 1933 (the second graduating class) was 60%. For students who graduated in 1935, all applicants were able to find employment. In 1939, the demand for graduates increased and the number of job applicants increased to 10 times that of graduates. In 1935, graduates were employed by Mitsui, Itochu, Marubeni, Kanematsu, and other general trading companies, non-life insurance companies, and banks.

In 1948, Kobe High Commerce became Kobe University of Commerce owned by Hyogo Prefecture under the new Japanese university education system (the former national Kobe University of Commerce became Kobe University)[11]. Prefectural Kobe University of Commerce was originally a college of economics and business administration, but later added the Department of Management Science and then the Department of International Commerce, giving it a total of four courses. The International Commerce course was designed to train personnel to engage in international business. In 2004, prefectural Kobe University of Commerce was merged with other universities owned by Hyogo Prefecture to form the University of Hyogo. Prefectural Kobe University of Commerce was taken over by the School of Economics and the School of Business Administration of the University of Hyogo, and in 2019, the School of Economics and the School of Business Administration were merged to form the School of Economics and Management.

(2) Global Business Course

In the 2019 reorganization, the School of Economics and the School of Business Administration were merged to create the School of Economics and management, while the School of Social Information Science was established with faculty members in OR and information sciences[12]. The concept of this reorganization was to train global human resources in the School of Economics and Management, and to develop human resources in the field of data science in the School of Social Information Science. The School of Social Information Science was the third faculty in Japan to be established in the field of data science. the School of Economics and Management, in addition to the Economics and Business Administration courses, established the Global Business Course (GBC, shown above), which offers a degree in economics and is designed around the subjects of economics and business administration. It is common for Japanese universities to have a business administration course within the economics department and offer a bachelor's degree in economics. Since economics was established as a major field of study and business administration was taught within it, the course was named the Global Business Course, but it offered a bachelor's degree in economics, which is a major field of study. However, the postgraduate master course that was subsequently established is a global business course, but it offers a master's degree in international business administration.

The GBC is a specialized course for the training of global jinzai. The course has a capacity of

[10] The employment status of Kobe High Commerce is based on Matsuyama (2021).
[11] The history of Kobe University of Commerce is as follows.
https://www.u-hyogo.ac.jp/outline/about/history/kobe.html (final access: 2023/11/13)
[12] In 2018, the author became the Director of the Preparatory Office for the establishment of the School of Economics and Management, and served as the Dean of the School of Economics and Management from April 2019 to March 2023.

80 students, 50 of whom are Japanese high school graduates enrolled in April according to the regular Japanese academic calendar, and 30 of whom are foreign high school graduates enrolled in September[13]. September enrollment was chosen to be consolidated with the academic calendar of the foreign country. Students admitted in April are selected in the same way as general students, through two entrance examinations: one is a recommendation-based entrance examination, and the other is a general entrance examination that involves taking The National Center Test for University Admissions. A CEFR level B1 is required for admission. On the other hand, September admission is based on recommendations from partner high schools and the general entrance examination. The school has agreements with high schools in Taiwan, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Thailand, Indonesia, India, and Romania for high school students to enter the school, and entrance examinations are held in each country to attract students. At the same time, the school conducts an entrance examination once a year as a general entrance examination and accepts students from Japan and abroad. The nationalities and numbers of students admitted in September are shown in Table 2.

Looking at the educational structure, April entrants spend one year in the International Student Dormitory. Similarly, September entrants live in the dormitory for one year, sharing a living room and kitchen with other September entrants who have already entered the dormitory the previous year. At the end of August, the previous year's students leave the dormitory and welcome the new September entrants. The purpose of living in the dormitory is to help students understand other cultures and develop a mindset of tolerance toward other cultures while living together with students of different nationalities, cultures, and religions. April entrants will spend their first term working on improving their English skills through a five-week English language training program in the Philippines during the summer vacation, while September entrants will replace this English language training with a program focused on learning about Japanese culture through hands-on experience.

The second term for students entering in April and the first term for students entering in September will be identical, so students will begin a program of studying economics and business administration courses in English. As an alternative research outcome to the graduation thesis, all GBC students are required to submit their research to Review of Global Business, which is a graduation requirement along with the presentation of their graduation research.

Currently, study abroad is not a graduation requirement for students entering in April. The goal is to increase the number of students who can reach the CEFR C1 level of English at the time of graduation and to provide them with expertise in economics and business administration over their four years of study. On the other hand, we are facing an unexpected challenge for students who enroll in September. Students are not making progress in their internship training at companies. This is related to the fact that there is no Japanese language test as a requirement for admission. Local companies in the Kobe area quite often require international students to speak Japanese. Some parts of the company are in a situation where they can communicate in English. However, this environment is inevitably limited, and even companies that are expanding their business globally still require Japanese language skills. But, if they cannot speak Japanese, they will not be able to find jobs at Japanese companies, including returning to their home countries. Although efforts are being made to increase the number of Japanese language classes, it can be said that the stagnation of internationalization within Japanese companies is causing the stagnation of job placement for students who enter in September.

GBC is an attempt to mix Japanese and international students in Japan and train them to work for Japanese or global companies. This educational program has yet to be evaluated. The fact that the

[13] There will be students from various backgrounds, not all of whom will be Japanese nationals, but will have been educated in Japanese high schools in accordance with the guidelines of MEXT.

Table 2 GBC September Enrollments and Country/region of Origin

country/region	2019	2020	2021	2022
Bangladesh	2		1	
Belarus			1	
Bhutan	1			
Cambodia			1	
China	1	2		
India	1	1	4	
Indonesia	7	6	5	11
Malaysia		3	1	
Mexico			1	
Mongolia			2	2
Pakistan		1	3	1
Philippines		1		
Romania	2		3	2
Thailand	14	4	10	9
Turkey	1			1
Vietnam	6	6	7	7
Zambia		1		1
Zimbabwe			1	
Taiwan	5	4	3	2
Kazakhstan				1
Mozambique				1
Lithuania				1
total	40	29	43	39

Note: Figures as of February 15, 2023.
Source: https://www.u-hyogo.ac.jp/em/topics/pdf/GBC_Report2023_1.pdf (final access: 2023/11/13)

program is taught in English has expanded the opportunities for many international students to study in Japan. With future improvements to the program, we intend to produce more people who will be able to work as global human resources.

Gaps in Training Global Jinzai

So far, we have organized the definition of global jinzai and introduced the case of the University of Hyogo. We would like to identify several gaps in the training of global jinzai in Japan. First, there is a gap in the definition of global jinzai, especially in the element of identity. Second, I will explain the gap in the education program of the University of Hyogo from the aspect of identity. And third, we will discuss how the intention of advocating identity widens the gap between the characteristics of global jinzai and those of global jinzai.

(1) Gaps in the Definition of Global Talent

As explained in Section 2, academic discussions defined the characteristics of people engaged in global business in terms of three elements: knowledge, skills and abilities, and suitable personality. The definition of global human resources made mainly by MEXT adds Japanese identity to knowledge, skills and abilities, and suitable personality. This, when considered separately from Japan, is the identity as a person of one's country of origin.

As Hall (1973) says, different cultures are mirrors for looking at one's own culture, and the situation of reaffirming one's own identity in the context of being internationally active is understandable. Caligiuri's (2006) discussion is an indicator derived from interviews with people who actually work for global companies in the U.S. and Europe and are considered to be global leaders. Therefore, it can be said that the element of home country identity is not a factor that those working as global leaders are aware of during the actual business phase.

Why did MEXT include in the definition of global jinzai the element of national identity, which is not considered by actual global leaders?[14] One possible explanation is the difference between the academic definition and the MEXT definition in terms of the time frame of global jinzai. One idea is the difference in the time horizon of global jinzai between the academic definition and the MEXT definition. The academic definition is derived from people working in a global work environment in global companies. In contrast, the MEXT definition is based on this academic discussion, but is based on the argument that high school students and universities who have not yet entered the workforce should be people who are ready to work in a global work environment. The difference between these two definitions is the gap in time frame between those who are working and those who will be working. From the perspective of an educational institution, it is important what kind of education to provide to those who will be working in the future. In this sense, identity education may be important in the early stages of education when people come into contact with different cultures[15].

“ *In this sense, identity education may be important in the early stages of education when people come into contact with different cultures.*

(2) Gap in the University of Hyogo's Educational Program

It was the policy of MEXT to emphasize Japanese identity in global jinzai education. In the same report, MEXT also stated that it aims to attract a large number of excellent foreign students to Japan and to make Japan an “educational hub”[16]. It states that excellent foreign students enrolling in Japanese educational institutions will serve as a stimulus to Japanese students. In addition, it states the following[17]

> “In addition, the report states that "excellent international students are considered to be an important human resource who can deepen their understanding of Japan and the Japanese people through direct exposure to Japanese culture and serve as a bridge between the two countries even after they return to their home countries. As other countries reaffirm the importance of higher education in a knowledge-based society and make national efforts to recruit foreign students, Japan must not lag behind and develop its own initiatives that take advantage of its unique characteristics and strengths.”

This is reflected in the basic policy for global jinzai development. In this 2011 report, it is as follows[18].

> “Strengthening the ability to expand globally while improving the educational capabilities of universities.To provide Japanese and international students with an attractive higher education in Japan and abroad, we will improve the educational capabilities of universities and create an environment for global expansion.”

From the above basic policies, policies such as internationalization of the university and securing

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[14] The report was published in 2011 by the Council for the Promotion of Global Human Resource Development through Industry-Academia Collaboration （ https://www.mext.go.jp/component/a_menu/education/detail/__icsFiles/afieldfile/2011/06/01/1301460_1.pdf ： Final access, 2023/11/13）.

[15] Hirata (2014) provides a survey of research on cross-cultural adaptive competence. Cross-cultural adaptive training has long been studied in Japan (e.g., Yasumuro, 1986). Some argue that identity, which is considered uniquely Japanese, works to advantage in a global work environment （https://globis.jp/article/7476：Final Access, 2023/11/13）.

[16] Final report of the Council for the Promotion of Global Human Resource Development through Industry-Academia Collaboration (2011)

[17] *Ibid*, p.4

[18] *Ibid*, p.5

excellent foreign students have emerged. The GBC of the University of Hyogo, shown as a case study, is designed in line with this policy.

To this end, GBC enrolls 50 students for April admission and 30 to 40 students for September admission, and provides global jinzai education. The educational environment at GBC provides an opportunity to convey the appeal of Japanese higher education to Japanese as well as international students. GBC's curriculum generally consists of classes that provide the general and specialized knowledge required of a global jinzai, classes and projects that enhance language skills and problem-solving abilities, and opportunities to adjust one's personality to a global work environment. The classes are designed to provide students with the opportunity to adjust their own personality to a global work environment. In short, the program provides the elements required for academic global jinzai. For international students, however, the program additionally provides Japanese language education, Japanese cultural experiences, and an environment to study Japanese companies in order to offer the advantages of studying in Japan. However, internships for international students at Japanese companies are limited to only a few companies in the Kobe area. This is partly because Japanese companies do not offer long-term internships, but also because Japanese workplaces have only a limited number of people who can provide job guidance in English, and if these people are sent to provide guidance to international students, the work will not get done. This is a situation in which internationalization of the inner company is desirable[19].

This is where the second gap arises. The program does not provide educational programs to strengthen Japanese identity or familiarize students with Japan, as defined by MEXT. Opportunities to be Japanese or learn about Japanese culture do not exist unless they participate as assistants in classes designed to help foreign students understand Japanese culture and society, which they are engaged in. In the globalization of Japanese universities, there are no opportunities for Japanese students to learn about Japanese people or Japanese culture, and opportunities to learn such knowledge are limited to international students. It can be said that there is a gap in the Japanese identity required as a global jinzai, as advocated by MEXT, in the globalization of universities, Japanese students do not have opportunities to learn about Japanese people. As for Japanese students, many things are customs and rituals that they already find basic, making it difficult for Japanese to learn Japanese culture directly as a university course.

(3) Gap between the element of Japanese identity and the characteristics of global jinzai

When asked whether Japanese universities must offer classes for Japanese students to learn about their identity as Japanese, we predict that only a minority of Japanese universities will answer that they do. Why would MEXT choose to include elements of global jinzai that Japanese universities are unlikely to offer classes on in order to train global jinzai? One possible factor is that global jinzai originated in Japan, and in consideration of the globalization of the Japanese people, it is likely that they want their students to have a Japanese identity. Since international students are enrolled in universities as a result of globalization, and classes on Japanese culture and Japanese identity are offered to them, it is not a good idea to offer classes to Japanese students at the same time. The idea would be to have them participate in the global working environment as Japanese people.
Another idea is that Japanese society as a whole should be global. The MEXT report states[20].

> “In today's global society, Japanese people are expected to become global human resources with the ability to respond to globalization in anticipation of a more globalized society."

In other words, in addition to some people becoming global, Japanese society as a whole is becoming more global. In this context, universities are responsible for

[19] Issues for Japanese companies pointed out in Yoshihara (1989).
[20] The MEXT's 2011 report is as follows.
https://www.mext.go.jp/component/a_menu/education/detail/__icsFiles/afieldfile/2011/06/01/1301460_1.pdf（Final access, 2023/11/13）

training global jinzai. The anchor that holds global jinzai together in Japan is their identity as Japanese[21]. The anchor of Japanese identity will keep Japanese people who are active in the global environment in Japan. Japanese who become global jinzai anchor themselves in Japan and build their careers there. Global jinzai recognize that their Japanese identity is the starting point from which they will build their careers in global companies.

For the globalization of Japanese society, let the global jinzai anchor in Japan. When global jinzai cease their global activities, they will return to the place where they have anchored themselves. The logic goes that the return of global jinzai to Japan will lead to the globalization of Japanese society as a whole in the future. This is the theory of the return of global jinzai. Some students educated as global jinzai choose to work for local companies and grow into global jinzai within those companies. The Kobe area, where the University of Hyogo is located, is home to local companies such as Kobe Steel, Kawasaki Heavy Industries, Kanematsu, ASICS, and Sysmex, as well as the Japanese headquarters of foreign companies such as P&G, Nestlé, and Eli Lilly. However, in many cases, students educated as global jinzai do not choose an area as long as it has a global work environment. This is true not only for Japanese but also for international students. Global jinzai are trained to work anywhere in the world, and it is rare for them to remain where they were educated.

"The logic goes that the return of global jinzai to Japan will lead to the globalization of Japanese society as a whole in the future. This is the theory of the return of global jinzai.

However, the emphasis on Japanese identity can be said to be the stance of MEXT and others who want to achieve the globalization of Japanese society by linking global jinzai who were raised in Japan to return to Japan. Global jinzai inherently has the opposite characteristic of regional ties. Global jinzai are disconnected from the region and work globally. The desire of the Japanese and regional governments to keep or return people with these characteristics to the region is difficult to realize. There is a gap between the desire of the Japanese and regional governments to return global jinzai to Japan by adding Japanese identity as an element of global jinzai, and the desire of global jinzai to be educated to work with anyone anywhere in the world as a global jinzai and to have a career as a global jinzai. There is a gap between the desire of Japanese and regional governments to return to Japan as global jinzai and the desire of those who are educated to work anywhere in the world with anyone as global jinzai and pursue careers as global jinzai. In order to keep global jinzai in the region where they were raised, it is necessary to have a mechanism to bridge this gap. A major point is the realization that, like salmon, global jinzai will return to the regions where they were nurtured. However, the national average return rate for salmon in 2022 is 1.93%, and even in Hokkaido, which has the highest return rate, it is 3.35%[22]. Even in the world of salmon, the probability of returning to one's hometown after venturing out to sea is low. Efforts to increase the return rate of those raised as global jinzai can be expected to be a very difficult endeavor.

Conclusion

Three gaps were pointed out in relation to the mission of training global jinzai at universities. First, in relation to this point, a comparison was made between the academic discussion regarding the definition of global jinzai and the definition of global human resources initiated by MEXT in Japan. The results of the comparison showed that global jinzai commonly discusses knowledge, skills and skills, and suitable personality, while the definition made in Japan

[21] The expression anchor here is inspired by Schein's (1978) discussion of carriers.
[22] The results of the study on salmon return rates are based on the Japan Fisheries Research and Education Agency's website as follows. https://salmon.fra.affrc.go.jp/zousyoku/fri_salmon_dept/ok_relret.html(final access, 2023/11/13)

adds the element of identity as a Japanese person. Second, he introduced the efforts of the University of Hyogo. He showed that since the University of Hyogo opened as Kobe high commerce, the starting point of its education has been the training of global jinzai. The current efforts of GBC are rooted in this tradition, and are consistent with the policy of university globalization aimed at by MEXT, and are an effort to train global jinzai at the university, he explained. Thirdly, he introduced three gaps in the training of global jinzai at universities: First, the definition of global jinzai includes an element of Japanese identity; second, even if global jinzai are trained in university education programs, there are still various gaps in the training of global jinzai. Third, even if global jinzai are trained in university educational programs, they cannot incorporate a lecture on Japanese identity due to a variety of factors. However, the characteristics of global jinzai materials inhibit a return to locality.

From this examination of the definition of global jinzai, the following logic can be derived.

① Start training global jinzai in Japan

② Completion of training of global jinzai in a global work environment

③ Global jinzai return to Japan

④ Globalization of Japanese society as a whole

As mentioned earlier, this is the image of salmon returning to their hometowns. However, as for measures to bring global jinzai back, so far only the psychological anchor of identity has been found. Further research is needed to understand how mature global jinzai return to their local communities and consider new careers.

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Special Essay:

Brand Personality in Japan

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We are very honored to have the opportunity to contribute to *Transformation of Japanese Multinational Enterprises and Business* which was projected to commemorate the 50th of Japan Academy of Multinational Enterprises (JAME). Please see http://mne-jp.org/english/sub1.html for the history of JAME. This publication was compiled through the dedicated efforts of three editors – Professor Shige Makino of Kyoto University, Professor Yasuro Uchida of University of Hyogo, and Professor Tami Kasahara of University of Shizuoka / Bentley University. We would like to express our sincere gratitude for their commitment and works with integrity. At the same time, it should be noted that this book would not have been possible without the contributions of the JMNE members. The book consists of 11 chapters and will be published by Springer Nature in 2024.

In the chapter "Variation and Continuity of Brand Personality in Japan", we discussed brand personality in Japan to answer a question: What are the elements of brand personality that undergo changes and remain stable? Especially, we focused on following points. First, as a carrier of culture brand personality varies spatially and temporally. Although spatial aspects of brand personality have been well examined, temporal aspects were ignored. Second, scale development of brand personality using hybrid approach has its strength to measure both culture specific and culture free elements without losing the explanatory power of theories/constructs in multi-cultural comparison. Third, we found that today's brand personality in Japan has same and different dimensions from Aaker (1997) and Aaker et al. (2001). The excitement and sophistication dimensions are spatially and temporally stable, the competency and peacefulness dimensions should be re-labeled to sincerity and imperfection, and the ruggedness dimension has emerged again since Aaker (1997).

In this short essay, we would like to briefly show readers the overview of our study and conclude

“In the chapter “Variation and Continuity of Brand Personality in Japan”, we discussed brand personality in Japan to answer a question: What are the elements of brand

Table 1 Four approaches to cross-cultural research

Approach	Comparison	Theory/Construct	Measurement
Emic	Impossible	Specific to each culture	Developed in each culture
Etic	Possible, but ethnocentric	Universal	Applied to different cultures
Derived Etic	Possible, but narrow	Limited to common element	Only common measures are used
Hybrid	Possible	Pan-cultural	Combination of common and specific measures

Source: Jitosho and Baba (forthcoming)

with some comments for the future research direction.

Brand Personality as Multi-cultural Scale

The study of brand personality originated with Aaker's seminal work in 1997, which defined the construct as "the set of human characteristics associated with a brand" (p. 343). The famous big five model consists of sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication, and ruggedness dimensions, and each dimension consists of facets and traits. For example, the sincerity dimension encompasses down-to-earth, honesty, wholesomeness and cheerfulness facets, and the down-to-earth facet is comprised of down-to-earth, family-oriented, and small town traits. The multi-level and nested nature of brand personality provides the richness of the concept as multi-cultural scale to international marketing research.

"Therefore, our interest lies in the temporal continuity and variation of brand personality.

The special consistency and variation of brand personality was within the range of previous studies. In this sense, brand personality scale is an excellent measure for discovering cultural characteristics. The brand personality scale has been replicated around the world and many country-specific dimensions were found. For example, dynamism, robustness, conviviality, and femineity in France (Ferrandi et al. 2000), superficiality in Italy (Caprara er al. 2001), peacefulness in Japan and passion in Spain (Aaker et al. 2001), gentle, distinction, annoyance in Netherlands (Smit et al. 2002), likeableness, trendiness, traditionalism, western, and ascendancy in Korea (Sung and Tinkham 2005), conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, intellect, and emotional stability in Croatia (Milas & Mlačić 2007), drive, conscientiousness, emotion, and superficiality in Germany (Bosnjak et al. 2007), and responsibility, activity, aggressivity, simplicity, and emotionality in Belgium (Geuens et al. 2009).

According to Aaker et al. (2001, p. 2), "processes of cultural meaning creation and redefinition occur over time, and involve many different fragments of society." However, most of previous studies were one-shot in nature, lacking longitudinal perspective, and failing to examine the change in brand personality dimensions within a specific country or culture. Therefore, our interest lies in the temporal continuity and variation of brand personality.

The Strength of Hybrid Approach

Table 1 shows four approaches to cross-cultural research based on emic-etic dilemma (Pike 1996; Berry 1969, 1989). In emic approach, the theory/construct is specific to each culture and international comparison is not possible. In etic approach, the theory/construct is universal and international comparison is possible, but ethnocentric, because the same measure is applied to different cultures. The derived etic refers to finding the common element between cultures. This approach enables international comparison but narrows the explanatory power of the theory/construct. Thus, these approaches have its strength and weakness.

The scale development of brand personality has the same logical structure with the hybrid approach which has its strength to retain comparability and explanatory power (Wind & Douglas 1980). By

Table 2 Brand Personality Dimensions in Three Studies

	Brand Personality Dimensions				
	Dimension 1	Dimension 2	Dimension 3	Dimension 4	Dimension 5
Aaker (1997)	Sincerity	Excitement	Competence	Sophistication	Ruggedness
Aaker et al. (2001)*	Excitement	Competence	Peacefulness	Sincerity	Sophistication
Jitosho and Baba (forthcoming)	Excitement	Sincerity	Imperfection	Ruggedness	Sophistication

* While Aaker et al. (2001) conducted surveys in both Japan and Spain, the dimensions outlined in Table 2 pertain solely to the Japanese context.

combining the common and specific elements, it develops "pan-cultural" theories/constructs/scales, which avoid cultural bias and reflect the idiosyncrasy of each culture. By conducting scale development of brand personality in a specific country, the researchers can find the dimensions which are common across countries and specific to a country.

"By combining the common and specific elements, it develops "pan-cultural" theories/constructs/scales, which avoid cultural bias and reflect the idiosyncrasy of

Brand Personality in Japan

We conducted a questionnaire survey to a full-time undergraduate program in a Japanese university (n = 582, 48% female, mean age = 19.9) using online platform. We relied on Aaker et al. (2001) for stimuli selection, personality attribute selection, participants, and procedures. The participants were asked "If brand X was a person, how would you describe them?" They checked a number between "not at all descriptive" (1) to "extremely descriptive" (5) for 100 traits of five brands (Coca-Cola, Nintendo Switch, Clear Clean (Kao toothpaste), iPhone, and Toyota cars). To identify the dimensions of brand personality, the principal factor analysis was performed.

Table 2 shows the brand personality dimensions of Aaker (2001), Aaker et al. (2001), and our study. The excitement is the only dimension common across three studies in the US and Japan. Comparing Aaker et al. (2001) and our study, the same dimensions are excitement sincerity and sophistication, and the specific dimensions to our study are imperfection and ruggedness.

First, we consider the common dimension. The excitement dimension being common to all three studies is the most typical brand personality dimension (Aaker 1997; Aaker et al. 2001; Kim et al. 2001; Smit et al. 2002). For instance, the match rate of traits between Aaker et al. 2001 and our study was 71.9% (28/32). Therefore, we can say that this dimension is spatially and temporally stable. The sincerity dimension mirrors the Japanese consumers' emphasis on brand trustworthiness. To illustrate, the traits, which have over .70 factor loadings in our analysis, such as precise, neat, diligent, sincere, and self-composed are important requirements for how a brand should be for the Japanese consumers. Although the second dimension of Aaker et al. (2001) was competence, we re-labeled it into sincerity because of the interpretation of Japanese meaning of traits and the lower match rate of traits (50%). The sophistication was the fifth dimension in Aaker et al. (2001) and our study and had only three traits such as sexy, romantic, and stylish in our analysis. This dimension is common to Aaker et al. (2001) and our study but the relative importance in explaining brand personality in Japan is low.

Second, we discuss the specific dimensions to Japanese context. Most notably, we found the imperfection dimension which consists of 14 traits (naive, timid, shy, dependent, reserved, clumsy, mild-mannered, careless, easy-going, unrefined, easygoing, childlike, cute, and laid-back). Although Dimension 3 shows the highest match rate (83.3%), the most representative traits of "peaceful" are not part of it. Thus, this dimension rather shows Japanese specific tendency to embrace one's imperfection than peacefulness. Japanese consumers tend to favorably accept a person's imperfection. For example, the term "Kawaii" denotes an aesthetic concept characterized by cuteness and adorableness, rather than perfect beauty. Nowadays, Kawaii anime characters and local mascots are experiencing increasing popularity, extending beyond Japan to international consumers. The emergence of ruggedness dimension, which is absent in the findings of Aaker et al. (2001) but identified by Aaker (1997), was a big surprise to us, because we believed that Japanese society is slowly moving from a patriarchal and masculine society to a gender-free society. This finding underscores the importance of a theoretical explanation of by what mechanism brand personality dimensions change.

Finally, through conducting a survey on brand personality in Japan and comparing our results with prior studies, we came to the realization that brand personality and its scale development can make significant contribution to the advancement of international marketing literature by addressing common and special factors of countries, cultures, or markets simultaneously. Stated differently, brand personality and hybrid approach facilitate research that is globally consistent while also being culturally sensitive.

Some Comments for Future Research

To further develop international marketing study, the following three points are essential. First, the mechanism of temporal continuity and variation of brand personality must be explained. As mentioned above, the emergence of ruggedness dimension implies the existence of background factors such like the influence of COVID-19, the rightward shift in youth demographics observed in Japan, and so on.

Second, multi-site and longitudinal studies are needed. Our study was conducted only in Japan. Our understanding stands to significantly advance through concurrent surveys conducted across multiple countries, allowing for longitudinal comparisons of the results. Although this endeavor will necessitate considerable effort and financial resources, it presents a worthwhile challenge to undertake.

Finally, while it has been reiterated in numerous contexts, the cross-cultural collaboration among researchers is essential for conducting globally consistent and culturally sensitive studies in the field of international marketing (see Craig and Douglas 2005). Unfortunately, international marketing research frequently encounters adverse outcomes stemming from mistranslation, misconceptualization, and misinterpretation. To avoid these problems, researchers should collaborate with counterparts who possess expertise in the cultural nuances of the target country, fostering close communication and extensive discussion among collaborators.

The authors intend to extend this research to other East Asian countries. If there is interest from any individual in reading this essay, we would be pleased to hear from you.

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