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COST EFFICIENT METHOD OF ENHANCING FOREIGN LANGUAGE CAPABILITY: TOURISM INDUSTRY OF JAPAN

The research attempts to discuss some issues, which Japan's tourism may face in the nearest future. Both qualitative and quantitative methods are used in the research. Qualitative include content analysis, and quantitative – a survey in 4 universities of Japan with the participation of 73 foreign students. For a clearer picture the survey was also conducted at 20 Japanese style restaurants as well as 20 metro stations. The major findings of the paper are: a) it is important to engage a number of foreign English speaking students into the service sector for better language proficiency, which will be a cheap solution for business owners; b) hiring students to teach personnel will be cheaper than sending them abroad or hiring professors from universities to teach.

Keywords: Japan; tourism; language proficiency.

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Анна Давтян

ЕКОНОМІЧНИЙ МЕТОД ПІДВИЩЕННЯ МОВНИХ МОЖЛИВОСТЕЙ: НА ПРИКЛАДІ ГАЛУЗІ ТУРИЗМУ В ЯПОНІЇ

У статті зроблено спробу описати деякі з проблем розвитку туризму в Японії в найближчому майбутньому. У дослідженні використано як якісні, так і кількісні методи. Якісні зокрема включають контент-аналіз, а кількісні – опитування в 4 університетах Японії за участі 73 іноземних студентів, що було підкріплене додатковим опитуванням в 20 ресторанах в японському національному стилі, а також на 20 станціях метро. Головні результати та висновки дослідження такі: а) необхідно підключати іноземних англомовних студентів в роботу японського сектору послуг, що може стати дешевим рішенням мовної проблеми; б) залучення студентів замість професорів або відправки персоналу на мовні курси буде більш вигідним рішенням у багатьох аспектах одночасно.

Ключові слова: Японія; туризм; мовна компетентність.

Рис. 1. Табл. 7. Літ. 21.

Анна Давтян

ЭКОНОМИЧНЫЙ МЕТОД ПОВЫШЕНИЯ ЯЗЫКОВЫХ ВОЗМОЖНОСТЕЙ: НА ПРИМЕРЕ ОТРАСЛИ ТУРИЗМА В ЯПОНИИ

В статье сделана попытка описать некоторые из проблем развития туризма в Японии в ближайшем будущем. В исследовании использованы как качественные, так и количественные методы. Качественные включают в себе в частности контент-анализ, а количественные – опрос в 4 университетах Японии с участием 73 иностранных студентов, подкрепленный дополнительным опросом в 20 ресторанах в японском национальном стиле, а также на 20 станциях метро. Главные результаты и выводы исследования таковы: а) необходимо подключать иностранных англоговорящих студентов в работу японского сектора услуг, что может стать дешёвым решением языковой проблемы; б) найм студентов вместо профессоров или отправки персонала на языковые курсы будет более выгодным решением по многим аспектам одновременно.

Ключевые слова: Япония; туризм; языковая компетентность.

Introduction. In the past few decades tourism has been playing an increasingly important role in countries' economic development creating numerous jobs worldwide (The Authority on World Travel & Tourism). Tourism development currently is

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viewed as an important tool in promoting economic growth. Many scholars have shown and proved that tourism can work for countries' development; not only for economic development but also for the development as a multidimensional process leading to what can be described as "good change" (Chambers, 1997; Scheyvens, 2002). In this regard, this research aims at identifying the issues which Japan's tourism industry possibly faces in order to be both attractive and competitive in preparation to the 2020 Olympics.

According to the World Tourism Organization (WTO), continued growth in tourism will be stimulated by push factors, such as growing congestion in cities and increasing socio-environmental awareness of consumers due to greater global issues (Scheyvens, 2002; WTO, 1998). 2020 Olympics can be a start for a new era in Japanese tourism. With the large contingent of young sportsmen and women from different parts of the globe, and also TV exposure associated with Olympic events, there is a huge advertising potential for local tourism. There is also potential word of mouth exchange of information based on impressions and experiences, of both contestants and spectators.

Japan doesn't have much natural resources, such as oil and gas, but it definitely has a huge potential and resources to become one of the world's most visited destination for tourists. With the world evolving and becoming "smaller", advertising via diverse means will play a major role in showing the hidden and nascent beauty of Japan to the world, with the aim to increase the number of visitors prior to and after the 2020 Olympics.

1. Japanese tourism. Several factors make Japan one of the attractive tourist destinations in the world. Japan is one of the oldest societies in the world with a very rich history. Its culture and traditions are unparalleled and it is also blessed with a lot of natural treasures. When one thinks of ancient Japan, things like famous and courageous "bushis" (samurai), and beautiful geishas come to one's mind. Rich history, in addition to mountains, forests, rivers, lakes, and wonderful beaches, all put together make Japanese tourism one of the best destinations for all seasons appeal.

For example, in winter Japan will be attractive for tourists who like winter sports: skiing, snowboarding etc. Spring is a majestic period in Japan with Sakura blossom, which makes everyone feel like they are in a fairytale. Summer is no exception as nice beaches, fireworks, and historical and cultural events take center stage. Autumn brings with it lots of colors, and tourists who don't like hot or cold weather would love to visit Japan during this season.

For having a clear picture of Japan's tourism industry, the number of visitor arrivals and the purposes of visiting Japan by countries, figures related to Japan's tourism industry are shown in Table 1.

From Table 1 it can be seen that in 24 years the number of total visitors arriving in Japan increased 4 fold. The number of visitors with business purposes increased 2 times. The reason of this can be newly opened foreign companies operating in Japan.

Figure 1 shows the total number of visitors arriving in Japan. We can see the increasing number of visitors decreased in 2009 and 2012 due to global financial crisis effect and the impact of 2011 earthquake and tsunami, respectively. Since 2012 the trend has recovered and is now on the rise again.

Table 1. Arrivals to Japan by purposes, data quoted from Japan National Tourist Organization (JNTO)

	<i>Total</i>	<i>Tourism</i>	<i>Business</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>Short excursion</i>
1990	2,031,285	1,262,012	420,489		
1991	2,311,455	1,467,091	485,605	282,802	75,957
1992	2,370,265	1,482,415	501,980	303,691	82,179
1993	2,224,698	1,334,976	508,575	295,871	85,276
1994	2,253,123	1,335,108	542,802	309,159	66,054
1995	2,094,702	1,154,405	562,964	295,431	81,902
1996	2,482,756	1,491,437	597,060	304,152	90,107
1997	2,753,903	1,721,487	618,210	331,144	83,062
1998	2,539,409	1,599,204	524,659	341,921	73,625
1999	2,832,489	1,743,509	593,887	377,298	117,795
2000	3,048,533	1,829,079	654,471	428,771	136,212
2001	3,085,237	1,827,904	647,600	471,758	137,975
2002	3,417,774	2,084,700	689,193	512,976	130,905
2003	3,511,513	2,142,267	707,140	524,961	137,145
2004	4,208,095	2,726,855	785,579	568,355	127,306
2005	4,627,478	3,150,093	838,026	570,287	69,069
2006	5,247,125	3,801,316	873,998	571,811	0
2007	6,130,283	4,601,596	917,477	611,210	0
2008	6,153,827	4,647,940	862,019	643,868	
2009	4,814,001	3,445,035	721,989	646,977	
2010	6,528,432	4,996,418	865,195	666,819	
2011	4,723,661	3,207,331	776,155	740,175	0
2012	6,387,977	4,795,664	893,596	698,717	0
2013	8,115,789	6,452,906	910,832	752,051	0

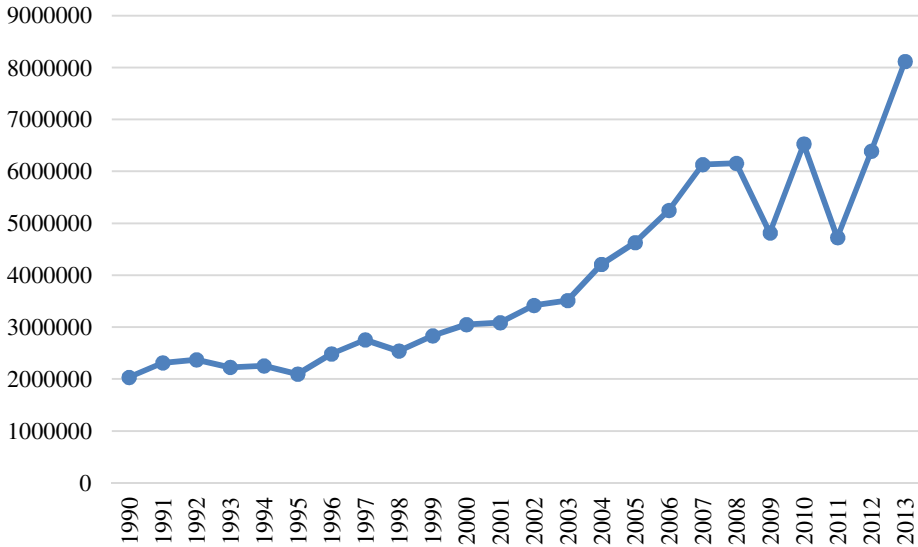


Figure 1. Number of visitor arrivals to Japan/by years, data quoted from JNTO

The peak of tourist season in Japan starts with Sakura blossom season which is in April and it continues with the holiday in Japan known as "golden week", which is at the beginning of May. Then the peak season continues with hot weather and beach season.

Table 2 below shows the number of foreign tourists from particular countries for April, May and June of 2014. Table 2 shows that visitors in Japan are mainly from Asian countries, which are Korea, China, and recently Taiwan. Unfortunately, the number of tourists from the rest of the world is still very low. It can be seen that the number of tourists from European countries was 60,972 for April, 43,900 for May and 35,900 for June. The figure demonstrates that 31% of tourists in April are from Korea.

Table 2. The numbers of foreign tourists to Japan, data quoted from JNTO

	<i>April 2014</i>	<i>May 2014</i>	<i>June 2014</i>
<i>Korea</i>	193,998	195,300	207,600
<i>Taiwan</i>	257,894	282,000	254,300
<i>China</i>	190,558	165,800	174,900
<i>Hong Kong</i>	79,357	70,700	78,100
<i>Thailand</i>	99,396	62,300	36,300
<i>Singapore</i>	18,662	18,300	23,300
<i>Australia</i>	30,174	18,600	21,100
<i>USA</i>	85,298	80,400	87,900
<i>Canada</i>	17,782	16,000	12,700
<i>UK</i>	23,588	16,900	15,000
<i>Germany</i>	15,218	12,100	9,400
<i>France</i>	22,166	14,900	11,500

Table 3 below shows the number of tourists from Europe in total and for particular countries: United Kingdom, France, and Germany.

Table 3. Number of tourists from Europe in total and from particular countries, data quoted from JNTO

	<i>Europe total</i>	<i>United Kingdom</i>	<i>France</i>	<i>Germany</i>
<i>1990</i>	403,639	101,927	51,014	65,818
<i>1991</i>	404,244	102,859	50,119	61,227
<i>1992</i>	395,983	104,395	48,605	63,930
<i>1993</i>	397,788	107,488	49,178	62,795
<i>1994</i>	413,586	119,861	52,447	64,708
<i>1995</i>	432,432	126,967	54,069	68,317
<i>1996</i>	473,170	141,112	57,445	76,002
<i>1997</i>	532,567	165,446	61,947	82,560
<i>1998</i>	564,238	181,533	67,102	86,194
<i>1999</i>	566,577	182,894	70,201	87,312
<i>2000</i>	607,862	192,930	79,079	88,309
<i>2001</i>	615,130	197,965	82,710	87,740
<i>2002</i>	671,495	219,271	87,034	93,936
<i>2003</i>	648,495	200,543	85,179	93,571
<i>2004</i>	726,525	215,704	95,894	106,297
<i>2005</i>	798,791	221,535	110,822	118,429
<i>2006</i>	797,961	216,476	117,785	115,337
<i>2007</i>	877,531	221,945	137,787	125,193
<i>2008</i>	886,723	206,564	147,580	126,207

Continuation of Table 3

	<i>Europe total</i>	<i>United Kingdom</i>	<i>France</i>	<i>Germany</i>
2009	800,085	181,460	141,251	110,692
2010	853,166	184,045	151,011	124,360
2011	569,279	140,099	95,438	80,772
2012	775,840	173,994	130,412	108,898
2013	904,132	191,798	154,892	121,776

Table 4. Number of tourists from Asia in total and from particular countries, data quoted from JNTO

	<i>Asia total</i>	<i>Korea</i>	<i>China</i>	<i>Taiwan</i>
1990	2,031,285	740,441	105,993	607,721
1991	2,311,455	861,820	130,487	658,106
1992	2,370,265	864,052	183,220	715,487
1993	2,224,698	845,423	206,743	668,581
1994	2,253,123	918,459	193,486	647,408
1995	2,094,702	873,635	220,715	578,651
1996	2,482,756	994,362	241,525	720,297
1997	2,753,903	1,010,571	260,627	820,234
1998	2,539,409	724,445	267,180	843,088
1999	2,832,489	942,674	294,937	931,411
2000	3,048,533	1,064,390	351,788	912,814
2001	3,085,237	1,133,971	391,384	807,202
2002	3,417,774	1,271,835	452,420	877,709
2003	3,511,513	1,459,333	448,782	785,379
2004	4,208,095	1,588,472	616,009	1,080,590
2005	4,627,478	1,747,171	652,820	1,274,612
2006	5,247,125	2,117,325	811,675	1,309,121
2007	6,130,283	2,600,694	942,439	1,385,255
2008	6,153,827	2,382,397	1,000,416	1,390,228
2009	4,814,001	1,586,772	1,006,085	1,024,292
2010	6,528,432	2,439,816	1,412,875	1,268,278
2011	4,723,661	1,658,073	1,043,246	993,974
2012	6,387,977	2,042,775	1,425,100	1,465,753
2013	8,115,789	2,456,165	1,314,437	2,210,821

Tables 3 and 4 shows that the number of Asian tourists in 24 years increased almost 4 times, but the number of tourists from Europe increased only 2.2 times. Comparing the number of tourists visiting Japan from one of European and one of Asian countries, we can see that the number of tourists from the UK increased, but at the same period the number of tourists from Korea increased almost 4 times.

2. Language as one of the barriers in tourism. Language is the key instrument in tourism industry as guest satisfaction starts from being understood. Guest (tourist) demand can meet the host supply only if the demands are understood properly.

There are many publications since the 1970s which mention that English is a language of many professions. English is a main language in different professional and vocational fields. Career areas are those in which English is widely used throughout the world include: computer programming, international commerce, engineering, tourism etc. (Hall, 1976). Many scholars have paid attention to the importance of language, especially in tourism industry (Barker, 2008; Davies, 2000).

Good communication in foreign language becomes crucial in today's world owing the impact of globalization. For global competitors, the most important factor is the ability to communicate wider, quicker and clearer (Bobanovich et al., 2013).

Foreign languages play an important role in business communication. In business administration, foreign language plays several roles, such as a role in internal (Bobanovic et al., 2013; Davies, 2000; Marchan et al., 1997; Marschan-Piekkari et al., 1999) and external communication (Bobanovich et al., 2013; Davies, 2000; Leslie and Russel, 2006), a role in having a chance to get a good job, and a role as a means to understand other cultures.

Communication is the important linkage between consequence and action in tourism organizations (Chen et al., 2006: 680; Donellon et al., 1986; Thitthongkam and Walsh, 2010).

Tourism organizational management is a method of planning, organizing, controlling (Nothhaft, 2010: 127) and leading to accomplish tourism organizational goals such as satisfaction, effectiveness and meeting expectations of international tourists (Kaur and Bhalla, 2010).

In the report of World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) the imbalances between travel & tourism talent demand and supply are mentioned. The report also stated that talent imbalances in travel & tourism take many forms, covering both shortages and surpluses (WTTC, 2015). One of them is shortage or surplus of job-specific skills, the including those of foreign languages.

3. Foreign students: solution for language issue. There is an incidence in Japan's history using foreigners for acceleration of development, since the Meiji period (1868–1912) (Burks et al., 1985). Many years later the internationalization strategy plan was announced by the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture (abb. MON-BUSHU, now MONBUKAGAKUSHO, 1983) to enroll 100,000 foreign students by the year of 2000 in Japanese institutions of higher education (Guruz et al., 2011).

In 1950 the number of foreign students was 2,149; in 2000 it already reached to 64,011. The target of the internationalization plan to enroll 100,000 foreign students in Japanese institutions, unfortunately, was not fully reached. In 2008 the number of foreign students in Japan was 123,892 (Guruz et al., 2011).

With regards to the language issue there is a need to find a solution for it. For instance, D. Leslie and H. Russell (2006), analyzed the perception of students in tourism-related industries. The study "A coincidence of needs?: Employers and full-time students" conducted by S. Curtis and R. Lucas (2001), discusses that students' employment provides them with advantages other than money – valuable work experience, the opportunity to meet people and to take on responsibility. Employers' benefit from an easily recruited workforce of intelligent, articulate young people who are numerically and functionally flexible, conscientious, accepting relatively low pay, and who are easy to control. Potential conflict is indicated these as students do articulate dislikes about their work and employment conditions, yet they feel unable to challenge their employers about them.

Method. This survey includes questions related to the objectives of the study.

Participants. 73 foreign students from 4 universities in Japan have been interviewed: Rikkyo University, Tokyo International University, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, University of Tsukuba. Additionally, 20 Japanese style restaurants as well as 20 metro stations have been visited.

Results and discussion. Foreign students as potential tourists with willingness to see Japan with its regions, since they are in Japan, are the best suit for identifying Japan's tourism foreign language capacities, as well as identifying their willingness to work in the service sector or to teach English (or other language) to the service sector (tourist-related) staff.

In the questionnaire for international students there was a question "Please, rate from 1 to 5 (1 – poor, 5 – excellent) English proficiency of the service sector staff (hotels, restaurants, coffee houses, metro)". 31 international students answered 1 (poor), which is 42% of the overall number of the interviewed students, 16 answered 2 (a bit higher than poor), which is 22% of the overall number of the interviewed and the rest answered 3 (middle).

In the discussion foreign students have mentioned they have heard from others that staff in high-class restaurants and five-star hotels speak English and have English menu, but they are mainly budget travelers, which means they are out of VIP zones and have less opportunities to be understood. Also they mentioned that the situation is much better in Tokyo than in the rest of the country and that outside the central areas of major cities, especially, in remote parts of the country, staff in hotels, restaurants, train stations etc. barely speak English and there is no English menu in most restaurants. This creates some problems for tourism industry development, resulting in a loss of potential profit, as well as making remote parts of Japan not an attractive option for non-Japanese speakers. For many tourists it is very difficult to find places and communicate in tourist-related places, and this in turn limits their travels.

As not all tourists can speak English, teaching native languages by foreign students (Chinese, German, Russian etc.) will be also useful for tourism-related business.

Today the major percentage of tourists arriving in Japan is Chinese. From the point of customer satisfaction, Chinese students (most of them speak Japanese very well) could be teachers of Chinese or work with staff oriented on Chinese market.

The interviewed foreign students are from the following countries: Table 5.

Table 5. Countries of origin of the interviewed students, author's

<i>Countries of origin</i>							
China	Nepal	Vietnam	Uzbekistan	Ireland	USA	Syria	Taiwan
Russia	Ethiopia	Afghanistan	Armenia	Turkey	Italy	Venezuela	Uganda
German	Guam	Indonesia	France	Pakistan	Sri Lanka	Tajikistan	Australia
Thailand	Azerbaijan	Bangladesh	Kazakhstan	Denmark	Thailand	Brazil	

Table 5 demonstrates quite a variety of countries and, consequently, rich variety of languages needed for higher tourist satisfaction.

By visiting 20 Japanese style restaurants in different parts of Tokyo, including suburbs we observed that only 3 restaurants had English menu. However, the staff did not speak English; orders were made by pointing out at a dish or a drink.

Staff at metro stations also could not understand the questions while been asked for directions.

All these facts show that Japanese tourism industry needs and should focus on staff training, projects with changing restaurant's menu and having them both in Japanese and in English, training of policemen and train station staff etc.

One of the biggest challenges that owners of hotels and restaurants face is the cost of employing English speaking staff. These owners cannot afford sending their staff to foreign language courses. Even if they can, there is no guarantee that these staff will learn sufficiently in a short period of time. Another element is that in most cases, the best staff would usually be selected to go on such training courses, thereby reducing the overall current productivity at the work place. One easy solution might be to involve foreign students, who study and live in Japan.

There are many international students studying in Japan and this provides a huge resource pool for business owners interested in improving the language skills of their staff.

Most recent data on foreign students enrolled in Japan, by the institution types are shown in Table 6.

Table 6. Number of international students by institutions' types, 2013
(Japan Student Services Organization)

Type of institution	Number
<i>Graduate school</i>	39,567
<i>University (undergraduate) / Junior college</i>	69,339
<i>College of technology</i>	
<i>Professional training college</i>	24,586
<i>University preparatory course</i>	2,027

Table 6 shows that the total number of international students in 2013 was 135,519. The majority of them are from Asian countries, about 82% of the total number.

Table 7. 5 major countries / regions of students' origin
(Japan Student Services Organization)

Country	Number
<i>China</i>	81,884
<i>Republic of Korea</i>	15,304
<i>Vietnam</i>	6,290
<i>Taiwan</i>	4,719
<i>Nepal</i>	3,188

The figures of JASSO "Result of the Annual Survey of International Students in Japan 2013" show that 3.5% of the students is from Europe (4753 students), 1.8% are from North America (2391 students), 0.7% is from Latin America (946 students). The total number is 8090. Taking into consideration that there wasn't a significant change in 2014, we can say that there are about 8090 native or nearly native English speakers in Japan, while there are about 127,429 students from other regions. Taking a pessimistic view that about 10–20% of these students speak English well, it can be considered that there are from 13,500 to 27,000 potential English teachers in Japan.

The biggest privilege of hiring students is that they are a cheap work force; their payment will be lower than the payment to qualified teachers.

Another important fact is that students will work with more enthusiasm as for them, it will be fun; they will get to know new people, and be in new atmosphere, not to mention the revenue.

The questionnaire included questions on working in the service sector or teaching service sector staff with the choice of answers "yes" or "no". From the interviewed 73 foreign students, 51 were willing to work in the service sector (restaurants, hotels, amusement parks etc.) and 53 would like to teach. The most important fact was that to the question on the expected salary for their work, 15 of them answered that 1000 yen per hour would be perfect, 14 would like to get 1500 yen per hour, the maximum mentioned salary was 3000 yen per hour, only from 4 students, the rest mentioned salary ranging from 1000 to 2000 yen for one hour (1100, 1200 etc.), which is considered a very low salary in Japan. This means that hiring foreign students is the cheapest solution. From the questionnaire it has also been observed that the average duration of foreign students stay in Japan is 3 years 6 months.

To mitigate this, qualified teachers or foreign students can be brought to the workplace and teaching can be focused on those elements of the language related to the tasks being performed. For example, training on how to make a reservation for a guest over the phone or accompany guests. Learning process may be faster this way, since lessons are focused on the work area. Another advantage of doing this is that workers don't have to leave work places to learn a new language.

In addition to teaching, students can be involved in translating menus at restaurants as well as in training processes of teaching languages to policemen and train station workers.

If the cost of printing new menus becomes a problem, simply printing English menu on a plain A4 paper (as have been seen in two of the visited restaurants) and attaching it to the main menu may suffice until the time when there are sufficient funds to make it an integral part of the main menu.

Concluding remarks and future work. Japan has all components (history, culture, traditions, and nature) to be a prominent tourist destination. It also has the attractions to sustain tourist influx all year round. One of the problems identified in the research is language barrier. The language issue mostly touches budget tourists, which makes the major percentage of all tourists coming to Japan. The actual solution to it is the mass employment of foreign students in the tourist-related businesses: first of all, by employing them in budget hotels and restaurants, also as assistants to metro staff.

In our further research we would like to conduct a survey in more remote parts of Japan for getting more details and have clearer picture of the issue. Our future work will be dedicated to conducting a survey with the officials of particular regions and owners of hotels operating there. The survey would help getting all needed data for offering some detailed solutions for these particular cases.

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