

Employment Status and Problems of Chinese Students Studying in Japan

Wang Jiadong*

Department of Foreign Language, Shandong Jiaotong University, Jinan, China

Abstract

For many years, the number of Chinese students working in Japan has always been ranked first among foreign students in Japan. However, the information given by Japan is relatively broad, China's domestic research in this area is also not much. So it is difficult for us to accurately grasp the accurate information about Chinese students studying or working in Japan. In this article, the author wants to find out the data related to Chinese students studying in Japan from the information released by Immigration Bureau of Japan. And find out the basic information of "employment visa category", "employment industry", "salary", "employment area" and "company size" about Chinese students studying in Japan. Then, the author will analyze the benefit of the economic benefit and skill experience of employment in Japan, and make an analysis of the difficult problems the students facing in their work in order to provide a reference for Chinese students to study and employment in Japan. By the end of 2017, there were more than 100 thousand Chinese students studying in Japan, of whom more than 20 thousand graduated each year, the number of employment in Japan was the first among the countries. Against the backdrop of a shrinking labor force and a shrinking market caused by Japan's aging and fewer children, it is also an opportunity for Chinese students to study abroad. In June 2013, the Cabinet Office Government of Japan formulated the strategy of "Japan's Revival Strategy" and clearly put forward the goal of "accepting 10 thousand foreign students to work in Japan every year". The number of employment of Chinese students plays a vital role in the realization of this goal. Then, what is the situation of Chinese students studying and working in Japan? How satisfied is it? What are the problems in employment? This series of questions needs further analysis and clarity. Solving these problems will have an important reference for Chinese students studying in Japan in the future. It also has great reference value for Chinese students to choose Japanese study abroad.

Keywords

Chinese Students Studying Abroad, Employment, Work Visa, Japan, Area, Salary

Received: October 11, 2018 / Accepted: October 23, 2018 / Published online: November 26, 2018

@ 2018 The Authors. Published by American Institute of Science. This Open Access article is under the CC BY license.

<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>

1. Introduction

The main purpose of this paper is to grasp the employment situation of Chinese students in Japan by analyzing the changes in the number of Chinese students working in Japan, job content, salary and treatment and employment area. Then the author will analyze the existing problems in employment and hope to put forward useful suggestions. As we all know, the population of Japan is decreasing year by year, and the

labor force is more and more inadequate. Japan's Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare released statistics for 2017 in January, showing that the number of births in Japan was only 941,000, a record low since 1899. At the same time, the number of deaths was 1.344 million, natural reduction was 403 thousand persons. In the long run, Japan's population is expected to decrease by 640,000 by 2025, 890,000 by 2040 and 940,000 by 2060. According to the National Institute of Population and Social Security Research, Japan's population will shrink from 127 million to 88 million in the next 40 years,

* Corresponding author
E-mail address: hancangyi140@126.com

and the proportion of people over 65 will rise from 28% to nearly 40%. In addition to the influence of fewer children, the Japanese industry has deeply reflected the problem of labor shortage. By 2020, the workforce is expected to have a gap of 4.160. In order to solve the problem of labor shortage, the Japanese government has launched a number of measures, including the introduction of foreign human resources, especially the foreign students. Data released by the Japan's Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare show that the number of foreign workers in Japan in 2017 was about 1.28 million, an increase of nearly 20% year on year, a record high. Chinese accounted for 29%, Vietnam 19%, Philippines 11%, Brazil 9%, Australia and New Zealand 6%, Nepal 5%, Korea 4%, Peru 2%, others about 15%. In order to attract overseas students, the Japanese government launched the "300 thousand overseas students" program in 2008, which is to attract 300 thousand foreign students to study in Japan by 2020. And many of these students will stay in Japan and become an indispensable labor resource for Japanese society. As of May last year, the total number of foreign students in Japan reached 267,042, an increase of 27,755, or 11.6%, from the same period in 2016, according to data released by the Japan Student Services Organization. More than half of them come from Asia, and the number of Chinese students studying in Japan has exceeded 100,000, accounting for 40% of all students studying in Japan, ranking first in the list. With the increasing business share of Japanese enterprises in the foreign market, coupled with the impact of fewer children and aging, Japan's social and demographic structure has

undergone tremendous changes. Japanese society will be more open to meet more foreign students in the future.

2. Employment Status of Chinese Students Studying in Japan

2.1. Number of Chinese Students Working in Japan

When a foreign student is employed in Japan, he or she must submit an application to the Immigration Bureau of Japan with the "internal notification" issued by the employing unit and the "certificate of graduation reservation" issued by his or her university. The Immigration Bureau of Japan will change applicants' certificate of eligibility from "studying" to "employment labor", which is work visa. Therefore, the number of eligibility changes is equal to the number of employed persons. Moreover, we can know the general types of international students' work from the specific categories after the change. In the past decade, influenced by the relationship between China and Japan and natural disasters, the employment of Chinese students in Japan has been fluctuating. Overall, the proportion of Chinese students working in Japan has always been more than half of the international students, and it was high as 73.5% in 2007. Statistics on foreign students working in Japan published by the Immigration Bureau of Japan in recent years are as follows.

Table 1. Employment statistics of Chinese students in Japan.

	Number of employed foreign students in Japan	Number of employed Chinese students in Japan	Growth rate
2013 (year)	11647	7637	8.6%
2014 (year)	12958	8347	9.3%
2015 (year)	15657	9847	18%
2016 (year)	19435	11039	12.1%

From the table, we can clearly see the number changes of employed Chinese students studying in Japan in recent years. Over the past four years, 36,870 Chinese students have been employed in Japan, with an average annual growth rate of 12%. This fully demonstrates that Chinese students have played an extremely important role in the composition of Japanese labor force and played an important role in the economic and social development of Japan.

This is mainly due to Japan's labor force and foreign student policy changes. Because of the increasingly serious aging and fewer children, the Japanese labor force is facing a very serious situation. Statistics from relevant Japanese government departments show that the problem of labor shortage has been profoundly reflected in the Japanese industry. By 2020, there will be a labor shortage of 4.16 million expected. In order to solve the problem of labor

shortage, the Japanese government encourages the introduction of foreign human resources. Owing to the advantages of age and knowledge structure in foreign human resources, foreign students have become the preferred talents in Japanese enterprises. In order to attract overseas students, the Japanese government launched the "300 thousand overseas students" program in 2008. This plan is not only to recruit a large number of international students, but also to provide them with financial and life support, as well as employment assistance after graduation. According to statistics from Japan Student Services Organization, the plan has now been completed by 90%. In Japan, the number of foreign students from mainland China has exceeded the 100,000 mark, accounting for 40% of the total, which has played a key role in the ultimate realization of the plan.

2.2. The Ratios and Developments of Work Visas of Chinese Students in Japan

Foreigners' eligibilities in Japan are eligible to be divided into 27 categories. The most common work visas for international

students after employment in Japan are mainly including: Humanities knowledge /International business (Humanities, such as law, economics, sociology, etc.), Technology (Science, engineering and other natural sciences), Management (Operation and management of enterprises) and so on.

Table 2. The ratios and developments of work visas of Chinese students in Japan.

Types	2013 (year)	2014 (year)	2015 (year)	2016 (year)
Total	7637	8347	9847	11039
Humanities knowledge /International business/(Technology)	5455	5897	8678	9712
Management	269	326	573	725
Professor	281	317	292	236
Medical care	77	99	211	242
Research	11	54	58	36
Education	11	4	7	9
Technology (merged to the first item in 2015)	1468	1625	0	0
High professional knowledge	0	0	11	20
Religion	4	1	8	0
Acting	0	0	1	2
Art	1	3	4	0
Skill	1	1	1	0
Rest	15	20	3	57

In 2016, 9712 foreign students (88%) were qualified for "Humanistic knowledge and International business/Technical" in Japan. This is a very broad category. According to recent data, most Chinese students are employed in this field. The number of employed students in the field of management increased by 1.7 times in four years, from 2013 to 2016. In the same period, the growth rate of foreign students employed in the medical field was even more astonishing, which increased 2.1 times in four years. In areas requiring high-level knowledge, such as research, the growth trend of Chinese students was not obvious. There has even been a regression in the growth of the number of professors. The reasons why the employment of Chinese students studying in Japan has the foregoing characteristics are as follows: First,

the employment scope of Chinese students studying in Japan is becoming wider. Second, in recent years China's economy has continued to grow, and the number of Chinese enterprises entering Japan has increased year by year. More and more Chinese students studying in Japan have directly entered Chinese enterprises for management work after graduation. Third, some students start business in Japan with the help of their family.

2.3. Job and Pay

From the statistics of the Immigration Bureau of Japan, we can not directly understand the specific job that Chinese students are engaged in in employment in Japan. We can make corresponding predictions from the general data.

Table 3. Statistics on employment of foreign students in Japan in 2016.

Job	Number	Ratio	Job	Number	Ratio
Translation / interpretation	7515	24%	Management	916	2.9%
Marketing	4759	15.2%	Accounting	860	2.8%
Overseas business	3103	9.9%	Education	516	1.7%
Technology development (Information Technology)	1990	6.4%	Research	490	1.6%
Trade business	1689	5.4%	Medical care	257	0.8%
Technology development (outside information technology)	1352	4.3%	International finance	128	0.4%
Design	1167	3.7%	Other	5572	17.8%
Advertising	951	3.0%	Total	31265	100%

From these statistics, we can see that in fact, the field of employment of foreign students in Japan, including Chinese students, is still dominated by humanities and social sciences. It mainly includes translation, interpretation, sales and so on. Very technical areas, such as Medical care and International finance, are very few.

Table 4. Monthly salary of foreign students in Japan in 2016 (Ten thousand yen).

Less than 20	20-25	25-30	30-35	35-40	40-45	45-50	More than 50	Unclear	Total
6501	9555	2140	514	218	195	60	106	146	19435
33.4%	49.2%	11%	2.6%	1.1%	1.0%	0.3%	0.5%	0.8%	100%

According to the statistics in 2016, we know that the number of students who earn less than 250 thousand yen a month

accounts for 82.6% of the total number of students. 250 thousand yen is also a low monthly salary in Japan. I think this

is mainly for the following reasons. The first is Japan's special salary system. In Japan, newcomers are generally underpaid, and wages naturally rise with years of work. This system has been in use for decades and is difficult to change easily. The second is that the foreign student jobs mentioned earlier rarely involve high-end fields, and the low salary is understandable.

2.4. Hot Areas of Employment and Enterprises Size

Japan's economic development in various regions is not very uneven, from the statistics, the employment of foreign students in Japan is generally concentrated in economically

developed areas. The number of students employed in Tokyo alone accounts for 47.7% of the total. The top five areas have 72% of all foreign students. These areas are not only large cities, but also representatives of economically developed areas. These are not only the first choice for foreign students, but also the place where Chinese people gather.

Table 5. Statistics for employment of foreign students in various regions of Japan in 2016 (top five).

Tokyo	Osaka	Kanagawa	Aichi	Fukuoka
9265	1989	1088	949	703
47.7%	10.2%	5.6%	4.9%	3.6%

Table 6. Enterprise size employing foreign students in 2016 (registered capital, Million yen).

Less than 5	5-10	10-30	30-50	50-100	100-300	300-500	500-1000	More than 1000	Unclear	Total
3891	3605	2397	1699	1967	681	591	389	3190	1025	19435
20.0%	18.5%	12.3%	8.7%	10.1%	3.5%	3.0%	2.0%	16.4%	5.3%	100%

According to statistics, there are two characteristics of the enterprise foreign students entering in Japan. Firstly, there are many small enterprises. The number of foreign students employed by the enterprises with the registered capital of less than 50 million yen reached 59.5% of the total. The second is the serious differentiation of grade two. The number of foreign students employed in small enterprises and large enterprises with registered capital of more than one billion yen reached 75.9% of the total. The number of foreign students in ordinary medium-sized enterprises is relatively small.

3. The Benefits and Problems of Work

In the preceding article, the basic employment situation of Chinese students in Japan can be roughly understood by the statistics of foreign students' employment from the Immigration Bureau of Japan. So in practice, what benefits will Chinese students get? What problems will they encounter in their work life?

3.1. The Benefits

Economic benefits:

Japanese and Chinese scholars have conducted a survey on the reasons for the employment of Chinese students in Japan. More than half of the respondents said that the reason why they are working hard in Japan is "to relieve the pressure of their parents' life in the future" and "to cope with the high domestic housing prices and other living costs". This shows that many people regard the economic benefits as an important purpose of their stay in Japan. "Saving money and returning home" seems to be a fixed behavior pattern for many people. How much economic benefits will the foreign students get in a year after their employment in Japan? Take the monthly salary

statistics of foreign students after employment in Japan as an example. If the monthly salary is 250 thousand yen, the monthly expenses need to be paid are as follows: the monthly meal fee is 30,000 yen, the rent is 40,000 yen, the electricity and gas fee is 0.5 million yen, the telecommunications costs is 10,000 yen, the communication costs is 20,000 yen, the transportation costs is 25,000 yen, the insurance is 45,000 yen, the rest is 20,000 yen, the remaining is 75 thousand yen per month. The annual balance is 900 thousand yen, plus the year-end bonus of 300 thousand to 500 thousand yen, with a net income of more than 1 million 200 thousand yen (equivalent to 80-90 thousand RMB) per year. This should be said to be a substantial income, much higher than that of China's graduating undergraduates.

Professional experience:

Japan is an exceptionally rigorous society. Most companies have perfect rules and regulations and mature corporate culture. Another great advantage of working in Japanese enterprises is to get all aspects and excellent professional experience. Chinese students generally reflect they are satisfied with their work basically. There are five main reasons. (1) Understand Japanese business organizations. (2) Get professional knowledge and skills. (3) Have more confidence in yourself. (4) Japanese gets better. (5) Accumulate useful interpersonal relationships. It can be said that in the course of their work, foreign students not only have a thorough understanding of Japanese enterprises, but also have greatly improved their language ability and comprehensive ability.

Vocational skills:

Vocational skills are important conditions to show individual professional ability and career foothold. Japanese scholars have conducted surveys on foreign students working in Japan about vocational skills. 60% answered that they learned

advanced technology or advanced mode of production in Japanese enterprises. Half of them answered that they had learned a good way of doing business. Technology, mode of production, and methods of operation are at the heart of business operations, and most people thought they had improved in these areas. Many Chinese students have improved their professional skills in Japanese companies. They made use of their technical and managerial advantages to find jobs by themselves in Japan or go back to China to start their own businesses. The benefits gained by foreign students in Japan are all-round, far more than three points above.

3.2. The Problems

Too long working hours:

Although Japan also practices the 8-hour working system, due to the heavy workload per capita, the work that can not be completed during normal working hours should be completed overtime. Working overtime has long been a unique working practice in Japan. Japanese research institutions have conducted surveys on foreign students about overtime. About 40% of them answered they work overtime frequently. Only 20% of the respondents did not work overtime. 6% of the respondents answered they work at night time (from 10 pm to 5 a. m.) frequently. And about 8% of the respondents answered they work on weekends frequently. The survey shows that the bigger the companies, the higher the frequency of overtime. More than 40% of respondents replied that the long working hours had a great impact on family life. Over 60% of the Chinese students in the survey clearly indicated their dissatisfaction with the overtime system. Most of the Chinese students said that although they knew it was normal to work overtime in Japan before they entered the job, they had been prepared for it, but after entering the workplace, they found that the situation was much more serious than imagined. Even if your work is done overtime, if your boss is still working overtime, you must continue to work overtime. Working overtime together has become a Japanese workplace etiquette. It's normal to leave the company at eleven or twelve o'clock in the evening! The overtime habit in Japan has become a major criticism in the eyes of foreigners.

Slow promotion:

Influenced by western corporate culture, Chinese and Japanese enterprises have gradually moved from tradition to modernity, adopting a competency-oriented evaluation system, but the final results are quite different. Chinese enterprises attach importance to personal competence and work performance. Even young employees with short tenure can be promoted quickly if their achievements are outstanding and their management methods are proper. It is common for them to exceed those with longer qualifications. The transformation

of Chinese corporate culture is relatively thorough and fast. Although Japan has reformed the system of lifetime employment and the senior system, the remaining force remains undiminished under the enveloping of traditional culture, resulting in very slow promotion. This has greatly affected the enthusiasm of many foreign students, including Chinese students.

Children's education:

Many Chinese students working in Japan are married and have children, and they are deeply concerned about their children's language learning and primary education. This is because children's education in schools will inevitably rely on Japanese not Chinese, children may become more and more unfamiliar with China eventually. Secondly, Japan has implemented loose education. Many people believe that Japanese primary education can not exercise learning ability. Some people plan to educate their children like this: Let children return to China to receive primary education, receive junior high school education in Japan in the future. Some even want their children to grow up in China and work in Japan. A complex "Chinese plot" is reflected in the complex feelings of children's education. This is a very complex psychology, which contains the homesickness of the Chinese people, but also the history of China and Japan entanglement.

Frequent job-hopping:

It is common for foreigners to leave their jobs because they are dissatisfied with the business or in pursuit of higher goals. Statistics over the years show that half of Chinese students do not plan to work in Japan for a long time. Nearly 30% of them have job-hopping experience. The main reason is bad company treatment, bad interpersonal relationship or boring work content. In addition to job hopping, many students choose to return to China to find a job or start their business. In fact, many people have made plans for the future at the beginning of their employment in Japan. Employment in Japan is only a temporary choice for accumulating work experience. Many Japanese scholars have discovered the employment trend of Chinese students. First of all, get a lot of economic benefits through hard work and acquire advanced technology and management experience. When the accumulation in Japan is enough to resist domestic risks, such as the cost of home purchase, then return to China. Of course, the main reason for choosing to return to employment is family reasons. Compared with Japan, China's social insurance system is not sound, and the mountain support for the elderly to a large extent needs children to complete. And in traditional Chinese view, it is the duty of children to support their parents. In addition, family reunion and children's education are also great reasons for returning to employment.

4. Conclusions

Although Chinese students are facing many problems in employment in Japan, in general, their efforts in Japan can be highly rewarded. Many Chinese students have been promoted to section chief or minister in Japanese enterprises and bought houses in the center of metropolitan areas; and many Chinese students have learned the experience of company management in Japan, returned to China to start their own business. The quality of employment of Chinese students should also be an important criterion for Chinese people's happiness index. At present, returnees are in poor employment, which may promote the employment of Chinese students in Japan. For this reason, Chinese students who are still studying in Japan should also understand the employment system of Japanese enterprises in order to seek better positions. Chinese students should try their best to improve their Japanese level, participate in various enterprise practices actively, have a deep understanding of Japanese corporate culture and understand Japanese way of thinking.

References

- [1] Lv Yuyuan (2010), Foreign student education in Japan and Its Enlightenment to China, *Journal of Social Science of Human Medical University*.
- [2] Dou Shuohua (2014), An Exploration of the Employment of the Chinese Students in Japan, *Journal of Huaihai Institute of Technology (Humanities & Socail Sciences Edition)*.
- [3] Lei Yu (2014), Problems faced by Chinese students working in Japanese Enterprises, *Journal of Sichuan Vocational and Technical College*.
- [4] Yang Jinshi (2014), Adjustment and Enlightenment of Japanese students' policy, *Education Exploration*.
- [5] Yin Zhenji, Wang Yu (2015), Japan's Foreign Student Policy and It's Cultivation Mode of International Talents, *Foreign language Research in Northeast Asia*.
- [6] Peng Wenping (2015), Comments on Japan's Public Diplomacy for Foreign Students, *Japanese Research*.
- [7] Guan Xiulan, Miao Danguo (2015), Time Characteristics of Chinese People's Stay in Japan, *Journal of Jiangsu Normal University (Philosophy and Social Science Edition)*.
- [8] XuZhimin, Zhang yanxia (2016), Reception of Returned Students and "National Interest" of Japan—the Policy of Chinese Students in Modern Janpan, *ournal of Jiangsu Normal University (Philosophy and Social Science Edition)*.
- [9] Qiu Chen (2016), Japan's talent strategy from the perspective of the policy of foreigners studying abroad, *Beijing Forestry University*.
- [10] Liu Yonghui, Qian Hongyan (2017), Study on Cross-cultural Adaptation of Foreign Students in Japan, *Journal of Education Institute of Jilin Province*.