Abstract

This essay argues that soft power resources in education are important for attracting individuals to migrate between countries and assimilate to the new language and culture of the new location. Japan faces a demographic crisis in the coming years with a dwindling population and a very large aging population. However, Japanese government administrators have expressed reluctance to deal with immigration reform directly due to domestic opposition and a high degree of cultural homogeneity. Instead, the Japanese government and private actors use one of Japan’s important soft power resources, education, to bring individuals from abroad in order to assimilate them to the culture and language for long term work and life in Japan. Japan’s attempts to utilize soft power resources in its educational system have provided mixed results dependent on the target population. Japan has successfully attracted individuals into fields related to higher education much more so than skilled labor programs. This essay discusses the importance of educational soft power resources in Japanese strategy to increase educated working population that is assimilated to Japanese language and culture. After reviewing the literature on soft power and the importance of soft power in Asia, the essay examines three cases of Japanese educational soft power - the JET Programme, the caregiver training program, and internationalization of university programs. In addition to suggestions that Japan is more successful attracting higher educated individuals seeking higher paying employment rather than skilled labor through these programs.
Introduction

Attraction has become a key word in diplomatic interactions between nations and peoples around the world through Joseph Nye’s formulation of soft power. Since the earliest discussions, nations in Asia have made significant policies toward increasing attractiveness toward their nation for various ends, such as investment and image of policy choices. The wealth and prosperity of Japan, coupled with its strong democratic values and cultural uniqueness creates an attraction among various countries’ peoples in the world. In a Pew Research Poll conducted in 2015, for example, 71% of those surveyed in the Asia Pacific found Japan favorable, while China received only 57% and South Korea only 47% favorability (Stokes, 2015). In the Pew Poll, Japan received the highest average favorability, though not all states held the most favorable positions toward Japan, such as Pakistan (48%), South Korea (25%), and China (12%). For Pakistan and South Korea, China received the highest favorability ratings, while China favored South Korea the highest. These indicators suggest that Japan (and China) possesses a latent attractive resource based on culture, economy, and political system.

There are two direct ways to use this latent power economically. In one case, Japan might use this power to attract tourists to Japan to improve its economy. The Japanese economy has experienced very long periods of stagnation and deflation in recent history, where increased economic activity might help alleviate these issues. Although Japanese tourism is not and probably will never be a major part of the Japanese economy, Japan is experiencing an unprecedented growth in tourism from other Asian nations in recent years, especially China. In 2015, Japan received a record number of visitors amounting to over ¥3.48 trillion surpassing the number of travelers from Japan in the year (Otake, 2016). These numbers are expected to continue to increase up to and beyond the Olympic games in 2020.

In the second case, Japan can improve attractiveness toward potential migrants to find jobs, and remove some pressure on the aging workforce. The primary difficulty with immigration to Japan involves the Japanese population’s resistance to foreign cultures potentially altering the Japanese culture, which is extremely rich in socially constructed rule-based requirements. Combining this rule-based culture with a closed attitude toward discussions with strangers, non-natives find it extremely difficult to navigate.

How might Japan deal with this difficulty assimilation? What kinds of policies might Japan implement to increase assimilation and under what rhetorical framework might these assimilatory efforts be described? Japan has successfully implemented two education based programs and failed in a third education program that encourage foreign immigration to Japan and helps with assimilation. In two cases, the described program intentions diverge greatly in the actualization of the program. In the third case, the desired outcome was more in line with the actual outcomes of
the program, however, diverging interests of the immigrants and immigrating country as well as the
difficulty of the program contributes to its failure.
This essay examines Japanese attractiveness through three programs designed as part of
educational internationalization and training of foreign populations. Before the empirical discussion,
the paper discusses initial assumptions about hard and soft power and the importance of attraction
as a form of soft power. Second, the paper reviews the literature discussing how nations might
use their educational systems and government policies toward attracting the public to improve their
national image and eventually gain economic or political benefits. Following this review, the essay
discusses the three cases of Japanese educational soft power in the JET Programme,
internationalization of higher education as part of the Super Global 30 project and other policies,
and the Guest Worker and Training programs for health care and nurses. The paper concludes
that these programs are all geared toward assimilatory policies rather than increasing multicultural
diversity (in the Western conceptual definition). In addition, the paper suggests that the largest
component responsible for successful assimilation of foreign populations involves the language
barrier, which inevitably leads toward cultural awareness and deeper understanding.

**Hard and Soft Power**

Power is one of the most important and least understood concepts in international relations theory
(Baldwin, 2002). Scholarship traditionally defines power based on the ability of one actor to
change the behavior of another actor through any means. This definition of power derives from
Dahl (1957) who helped illustrate the four important defining aspects of power relations between
two individual actors. These include the source of the power, the instruments of power, the quantity
of power, and the scope of the power (Dahl, 1957, p. 203). This definition emphasizes the
importance of relations when discussing power and the scope conditions that limit power
effectiveness. In other words, whenever we discuss an actors’ power, we must relate that power to
another actor or object and discuss the types of behavior or changes the power can affect. For
example, a professor at a university can exert powerful influences on students in the classroom on
how they thing and the work they do for the class by changing incentives and grading techniques.
Professors usually do not have much power to influence student behavior beyond the classroom
and topic in the class. If I asked my students to donate money to a particular cause, very few
students would be influenced as it lies outside the scope of the powers generally instilled in a
professor within a university context.

Many discussions of power subsequent to Dahl worked within the confines of these four aspects,
attempting to measure latent and manifest power sources, exercise of power over others and the
tools used, measuring relative power between actors, and finally measuring the fungibility of power
over various behaviors. For example, studies in realism often involve measuring relative power
changes and resulting changes in state behavior (Schweller, 2004; Taliaferro, 2004) or the
fungibility of military power to influence the behavior of other states (Art, 1996). Discussions in
constructivist theory often involve the importance of non-physical forms of power such as changing
identity or building group cohesion as means to change outcomes (Wendt, 1999). Many liberal theories in international relations involve the importance of monetary forms of influence and interdependence of relations as a means to change state behavior (Kirshner, 1995). Centering the discussion on the means of influence over other actors is common to all these studies, most likely because policy makers find use in the ability to influence others.

A second set of examinations on power and influence over others involves the ideas of soft power, which discuss the means and mechanisms of influence of mostly non-physical forms of influence, based in resources such as symbolism and culture. Joseph Nye emphasized the importance of attraction of culture and norms as a means to change behavior of other actors in the international system. Nye defined soft power as the “ability to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion or payments… from the attractiveness of a country’s culture, political ideals, and policies” (J. S. Nye, 2004, p. x). Soft power primarily defined as attraction of one entity to another. Although the definition of this form of soft power contains some contentious elements, for the purpose of this argument, we assume that some form of attractive soft power is possible and that states can attempt to capitalize on this attraction. It is particularly clear in cases of migration where countries are literally attracting people from other nations to move, live, and work, in a new location. In these cases, therefore, attraction not only has a mental or metaphysical property, but also a clear physical observable change in behavior - people move to a new country.

One of the central facets of soft power that distinguishes it from other forms of power and other definitions of power involves the attraction concept. Nye first described the soft power concept in terms of attraction and discussed the importance of attraction in the future of US foreign policy toward other nations. The idea of attraction in foreign policy was used widely in US policy during periods of conflict, such as the use of gifts and chocolate to individuals in Europe and the appeal to “hearts and minds” during the Vietnam war (McWilliams, 2011). Still, the concept developed by Nye has taken on greater attention from theorists and practitioners in international affairs as an alternative to the traditional economic and military sanction-like tendency in foreign policies.

Nye makes a stark contrast between hard and soft powers, primarily by distinguishing the means of influence over others. Rather than relying on military means of influence, he defines soft power through cultural attraction. This dichotomy is somewhat unsatisfying since it does not allow for fungibility of power across different forms of power and ignores other tools such as economic attraction, agenda-setting power, and the use of rhetoric or framing. Instead, harder and softer powers form a continuum across which different means and resources are used to influence other actors whereby some means cross into different types of power (Rothman, 2011).

The idea of attraction essentially requires that states maintain policies that attract attention and affection from other nations or nationals of other states. The idea of attraction is a concept primarily reserved for objects with the ability to sense something desirable in another. For example, people may be attracted to one location or another because of friends or family living in that area, because of the weather, job opportunities, etc. Some of these are outside the control of governments, while for some governments have the ability to increase or decrease the
attractiveness for certain areas or some types of people. If government of one particular area wishes to increase the number of business involved in green energy, the government can create an attractive environment by increasing potential subsidies or grants, creating some costs to businesses not involved in green technology, or simply stating publicly their support for such industries.

In the definition of soft power, Nye neglects the importance of intent. In most definitions of power, there is an important difference between exerting influence intentionally and unintentionally affecting behavior of another. Soft power blurs this distinction because cultural attraction is difficult to manipulate and use to a particular end. In fact, the same culture can be repulsive as well as attractive to different individual actors depending on the relationship between the target actor and the culture. Saliency of a particular culture and the framing of the culture can have influences over the degree to which the culture influences an actor and the direction of that influence (Rothman, 2010). Difficulties in our understanding of the fungibility of different forms of power and the intentionality of actors using different forms of power impeded our understanding of the differences between hard and soft power.

Despite these difficulties, soft power attraction remains an important part of national foreign policy for a number of states. In Asian in general, and for China, Japan, and Korea in particular, soft power and rhetorical framing have been important parts of foreign policy. In a type of war of culture, these three nations in particular engage in soft power influence through cultural sharing, language exchanges, symbolic movements and protests, and internationalization of education. Reforming educational institutions in particular creates greater opening for the migration of foreign nationals. Internationalization of educational institutions in particular increases the potential for migration by opening up domestic schooling institutions to greater numbers of foreign students. This migration allows nations to impart their cultures on the students visiting from other countries and attract them toward national policies. In the case of migration, a number of costs are involved with relocation including monetary costs of transportation and housing, the opportunity costs of previous employment, as well as the emotional or cultural costs of adjusting to a new location, and learning a new language in the case of international migration. The benefits of migrating may consist of higher educational opportunities and potential future earnings, new skills, or a better physical or social environment.

**Education as Soft Power**

Education is an important though perhaps under explored avenue for softer power influences. As Altbach and McGill state, “Higher education has always served as an international force, influencing intellectual and scientific development and spreading ideas worldwide” (Altbach & McGill-Peterson, 2008, p. 37). Education as a tool for implementing soft power internationally is relatively under-explored in the literature on soft power in international relations, though there are some efforts discussing education within the Asian context. In particular, Asian nations such as China and Japan use their educational institutions in different ways to further the national goals
through educational soft power influences. Without a doubt, national educational practices
influence the domestic political culture and interaction among individuals. Educational practices in
Germany and Japan during World War II, and educational reforms after the war greatly influence
the attitudes of individuals in those countries. Educational practices in Japan have since continued
to raise controversy with the Republic of Korea and the People’s Republic of China (M. Lee, 2001;
W. Lee, 2001; Rose, 1999). In the United States, as well, higher educational practices raised
discussion about the degree to which professors’ bias toward liberal discussions and discourage
conservative viewpoints among students, altering the culture and identity for future generations
(Groseclose, 2011; Gross, 2013). Russia also relies on education to encourage economic
development and transmit particular cultural values to the domestic population (Tareva & Tarev,
2017). These studies show little doubt that education is an important state tool toward condition
domestic populations with particular ideological and cultural identities.

In international relations, however, the use of educational soft power remains under-explored.
Within the limited research on soft power and international education, studies suggest the
importance in two areas: directed policy on the internationalization of domestic educational
institutions to encourage foreign participation and the exporting educational opportunities abroad to
influence foreign populations.

Internationalization of education involves the ability of countries to expose their domestic cultural
attractive traits to international students. Many countries developed programs to increase
international cultural understanding after World War II, such as the United States Information
Agency, the British Council, the DAAD and Goethe Institutes, EduGrance, the Japan Foundation,
and the Canadian Studies Program within the department of foreign affairs (Trilokekar, 2010).

Students who attend foreign universities “usually return home with a greater appreciation of …
values and institutions” (J. Nye, 1999, p. 42). The goal of many programs involved domestic
institutional reform to encourage foreign applicants to domestic university systems. In 2007, Yang
reported that Chinese universities enrolled students from 178 countries and increased from about
36,000 to 110,800 within a 10 year period (Yang, 2007). The Japanese government created a
program, the JET Programme, to import foreign instructors of English to reform primary and
secondary education while exposing these foreign instructors to Japanese culture. Rather than
internationalizing the university school system, the Japanese government provided opportunities
for foreign students to experience Japanese culture, create networks, and establish stronger
connections to Japan for use later in their careers. This is discussed in more detail later in the
paper.

In the second case of soft power and education, countries export their educational programs
abroad to develop soft power influences. China successfully created such a program through the
use of Confucius Institutes teaching Chinese language throughout the world’s higher educational
institutions (Ren, 2012). By 2012, 353 Confucius institutes were established in 104 countries (Ren,
2012). Although Ren concludes that Confucius institutes provide little contribution to Chinese soft
power influence because they lack a strong cultural education component, language education
alone may constitute some soft power influence. Although not the subject of this article, it is possible that students simply taking the time to learn a foreign language have a greater propensity to interact with that country in the future making that influence somewhat substantial, as is demonstrated in the JET Program discussed later. As Paradise (2009) suggests, even if the only benefit to China through Confucius institutes involves the expansion of networks and contacts for Chinese universities, it amounts to substantial gain for China.

The research on education and soft power clearly suggests an important potential for influence on both domestic and foreign populations. The degree to which different programs are successful depends on factors yet to be clearly determined in the literature. Up until this point, research on educational soft power influences involves particular state sponsored programs designed to develop increased relations with foreign populations. Measuring the degree to which these programs are successful remains complicated primarily due to the unclear meaning behind cultural influences and the time before experiences in higher education become manifest in material or policy gains many years later. The next sections of the paper discuss several programs in Japan designed with particular policy goals such that measurement of effectiveness becomes more manageable. Interpretation of influence on foreign nationals beneficial toward the state, however, remains ambiguous.

**Japanese Educational Soft Power**

Japan attempted to attract foreign nationals in three ways: bringing foreign nationals as English teachers, using international educational institutions to teach Japanese language and culture, and using training institutions to teach Japanese language and culture. These three methods differ significantly from western practices using higher educational institutions as a form of soft power. Japan suffers from a more difficult context, being a non-English speaking country and desiring to attract foreign nationals through the educational system. For many educational institutions in the western English speaking countries, bringing students from foreign countries into their institutions is a viable practice. Since much of the world uses English as a second language, the attraction of participating in a higher education experience in a desirable language environment creates potential study abroad spaces.

In addition to the language environment, Japan is a highly contextualized culture, which requires significant experience to understand the cultural norms in both language and living practice. Although Japan government frequently discusses the importance of increasing foreign nationals in Japan, the culture is difficult for most to penetrate. Japanese society as a whole remains rather xenophobic toward foreign cultures influencing and changing the Japanese practices in lifestyle and business. This combination of resistance to change from foreign cultures and the seemingly impenetrable Japanese cultural and social practices generates serious impediments to incorporating foreign nationals into the community work due to cultural and language difficulties.
Japan Exchange Teaching (JET) Programme

The Japan Exchange Teaching (JET) Programme was designed to kick start an internationalization process in Japan in the late 1980s in order to bring Japan closer to the international community of diversified states. The program specifically started to "increase mutual understanding between the people of Japan and the people of other nations" (The Council of Local Authorities for International Relations, n.d.). The program continues even today as one of the most successful attempts at internationalization through importation of diverse populations into the education system. Although touted as a means to promote internationalization by improving English education at the local community level (The Council of Local Authorities for International Relations, n.d.), Japan shows very little progress improving English standards. In Asia, Japan ranks below many other Asian nations such as Taiwan, Indonesia, Vietnam, and South Korea ("EF English Proficiency Index: Asia," n.d.). In the English Proficiency Index, Japan ranks as a "low" proficiency in the second to lowest category of countries in Asia.

In 2000, a comprehensive examination of the JET programme concluded that the program implementation lacked coherence and often fails to achieve objectives of improving education and internationalization of youth in Japan (McConnell, 2000). Educational practices in Japan failed to change much from importing foreign college graduates who were themselves, largely untrained in educational pedagogy or formal English studies. In addition, foreign nationals participating in the JET program stood out from the Japanese system, where educators in Japan placed these individuals at safe distances allowing Japanese practices and foreign educational approaches to act concurrently (McConnell, 2000, p. 269). Most of the studies on the JET programme primarily focus on the educational value of importing English speakers to improve the lackluster English education program, lacking significantly behind Asian counterparts (Metzgar, 2017). However focusing on the educational benefits for language misses a larger point of the connections being built through Japanese soft power and contact with the foreign college graduates. Rather than improving English education and internationalism at the local level, the program instead allows Japanese individuals to experience foreign national cultures and identities and create connections between the foreign individuals who participate in the program and Japan. What studies discussing the JET programme fail to notice are the large numbers of foreign nationals that either remain in Japan after the JET programme time limit ends or maintaining connections to Japan through their later business or career enterprises. There are a number of JET alumni associations and continued cooperation with JET participants through the Council of Local Authorities for International Affairs, CLAIR, which partly funds the official alumni organizations (Metzgar, 2017, p. 114).

Through a snowball sampling survey, Metzgar analyzed results of over 500 American JET alumni and concluded that the JET alumni have a generally overwhelming positive impression of Japanese society (Metzgar, 2017, p. 127). This, in itself cannot document success of the JET program influencing internationals simply because there is no comparison made with the general
population. The results suggest however, that there is an impact on foreign nationals and Metzgar concludes so, though not necessarily an intended consequence of the program.

This paper further contends that the internationalization sought in Japan is not the same as the one considered in the west. Western definitions of multiculturalism and internationalization involve increasing the diversity, racial, ethnic, cultural, etc. Japanese internationalization, however, seeks to do so through assimilation rather than diversifying the population at large. In other words, the JET program served as a first step toward other programs aimed at educating foreign individuals on the cultural practices in Japan, acclimating those individuals to the customs by which time many of those individuals will find a place to live and work within this culture. Rather than bringing in foreign cultures to Japan, Japan programs seek to Japanize foreign nationals into much of the culture and practices within Japan. This serves an important purpose to lesson the difficulties for Japanese nationals with the increased diversity within their borders.

University Internationalization and Assimilation

In what almost seems like a second stage of internationalization, moving from middle and high school internationalization to university, a series of recent policies increased funding for higher education internationalization. However, this program, just as the JET Programme seems more attuned to bringing internationals to Japan and acclimating them to Japanese norms and society than it is to internationalizing the Japanese population, though there are likely effects on both. One of the recent policies implemented at the Ministry of Education on higher education is designed to increase the use of English as a medium for education in classes. These English based education programs do not generally entice Japanese nationals to increase their English proficiency, but they often attract English speakers from abroad to Japanese society and education system. This serves clear economic benefits by bringing foreign nationals to live and work in Japan, and the institutions may maintain programs to ease the transition into Japanese society. Rather than focusing on changing the Japanese population to accept greater intrusions and diverse cultures, these institutionalized policies attempt to both select those who are inclined toward Japanese societal institutions and norms and assimilate those individuals more deeply into Japanese culture and language.

Recently, the Japanese Ministry of Education launched a number of initiatives to improve internationalization of universities in Japan. One of the largest of these initiatives involves the Super Global 30 Program. The program is funded by the Ministry of Education to increase competitiveness of Japanese universities through internationalization and developing curricula based on international standards. For instance, one university selected for the program, University of Tokyo, developed a plan to create a global campus through reforming their educational policies, developing wider number of English based courses, publishing research in English, as well as Japanese and other languages, and developing the administrative support throughout the university (Tokyo, n.d.). The Super Global University program separated universities between two types, those pursuing high-level international rankings (Type A) and those pursuing increased
internationalization (Type B). Based on university self-reported data to the Ministry of Education, data show the number of universities offering at least one course in English as a medium of education increase between 2005 and 2013 from about 176 to 262 (Brown, 2017). Although many universities maintain some level of education classes in English, the programs are rather shallow and do not serve many subject areas or in many course across these universities (Brown, 2017). The number of foreign students in Japan also exploded in recent years. In six years between 2010 and 2016, the number of Vietnamese studying in Japan increased by a factor of 12, which now amounts to about 25% of the foreign students in Japan (Chinese students amount to about 41%) (Yoshiaki & Nguyen, 2017). Despite the large increase of students in some areas, the total number of foreign students in Japanese higher education institutions has been relatively steady in data provided by the Ministry of Education between 2010 and 2014 at about 120,000 students (MEXT, 2016). The increases in students documented in Japan, therefore, occur at other institutions such as language schools, pre-secondary institutions, or non-accredited education institutions.

Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University (APU) offers an exception to the rule of small and shallow English-based educational programs. Touted as one of the most diversified higher educational institutions in the world, APU offers dual curricula in both English and Japanese for a student body from more than 150 countries regularly in attendance (Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University, n.d.). Most courses at the university are offered in both English and Japanese and the degree requirements vary based on foreign (English-based) students and domestic (Japanese-based) students.

Although the university is also mandated to increase the internationalization of Japanese students attending the university, some of the strictest policies implemented at the university assimilate the foreign population to living in Japan. That is not to say that there is no interaction between Japanese students and foreign students or that there are no internationalization effects on Japanese students. The largest impacts, however, are probably felt with the international students, many of who learn Japanese language and culture sufficiently to move into the Japanese corporate environment.

The two policies at the university that have the greatest impact on international students are the Japanese language requirements and the living requirements for first year students. All English-base students are required to take approximately two years of intense Japanese language education and many students take courses. Language acquisition is a pre-requisite for long-term relations with Japan because the country largely operates on a Japanese basis. Although it is possible for most individuals to live in Japan without learning Japanese language in depth, this requirement acts to acclimate these students toward longer-term attachment and living in Japan. Although data are not available, counterfactually, it is easy to imagine that students are more likely to maintain relations with Japan given the difficulty and large time investment required to learn a second and difficult language. In addition, all international students are required to maintain residency together in a dormitory near campus and away from the general population of the city.
where the university is located. During the time the students live in the dormitory, they are taught several cultural norms, experiencing how to live and work in Japanese society. For instance, because Japanese cultural norms require careful sorting of garbage for pickup on specific days, there are very specific policies for students to sort their garbage sometimes for inspection. These policies are just two examples of how the university incorporates Japanese normalization and acculturation into the foreign students, who after living and experience Japan for four years usually stay in Japan to work and live for a medium to long term period.

Worker Training Programs

Given Japan’s difficulties in specific labor markets due to aging population and a reduction in working aged adults, the Japanese government has encouraged a number of foreign worker training and immigration programs. These “guest worker” programs involve a variety of relatively low-skilled and unskilled labor pools, such as construction and health care. Although these programs do not directly involve immigration and cannot be discussed as immigration programs due to domestic political concerns (Curran & Cislo, 2016). In general, Japan has no particular visa status for unskilled laborers and no path to residency. Instead, Japan relies heavily on programs for interns, guest workers, and training programs, which are sometimes used to exploit foreign labor without adequate oversight. The US Department of State, which compiles a comprehensive report on trafficking for nations around the world and categorizes them based on abuse, placed Japan in “Tier 2” since 2014 suggesting significant problems. The 2016 report states that Japan, “is a destination, source, and transit country for men and women subjected to forced labor.” The report also states that migrant workers are “subjected to conditions of forced labor, including some cases through the governments’ Technical Intern Training Program.”

Despite these concerns over labor abuses, these programs have flourished to increase the number of workers in specific areas where Japanese labor market remains too small. One such program involves the Economic Partnership Agreement between Indonesia and Japan to increase the number of aid workers and health care workers in the overly burdened elderly care industry. Japan nursing industry in general suffers from conditions such as lower pay, lower social status, long hours, irregular working conditions and unpaid overtime (Radesa, 2014, p. 23). Under this program, nurses are required to pass Japanese nursing exams in order to be licensed to work in Japanese health care facilities. This requires a substantial knowledge of Japanese language and cultural issues in order to deal with the working environment and the exam. Based on information gathered from the Deputy of Labor Placement Division in Indonesia, the number of applicants from Indonesia declined between 2009 and 2012 quite dramatically due to the difficulties passing the exams (Radesa, 2014). Though more recently, in 2014, the Japanese government increased the time available to these individuals to pass the test in order to increase the overall exam pass rate, which seemed to be the greatest cause of difficulty to entry into the Japanese labor market (Kyodo, 2015).
The case of Indonesian and other health care workers point directly to the problem of language and acculturation into Japanese society as the primary impediment to continued long-term work prospects in Japan. The limitation the government places on 3 or 4 years for these individuals to come to Japan, learn the language and culture enough to work and live in Japan and pass the nursing exam has been the primary difficulty (Kyodo, 2015; Radesa, 2014). One of the biggest problems with language education for these candidates involves the use of local dialects and slang, which is not taught as part of formal Japanese language education programs (Radesa, 2014). Although the program for nursing continues and the Japanese government attempts to alleviate some of the difficulties, the program is considered generally as a failure. Few of the applicants are successful passing the exam to become licensed nursing or health care workers in Japan. The primary reason for this failure involves Japanese language and the difficulty of long work hours in the training program expected of the workers.

Conclusions

This paper examined the use of educational programs as a means to increase soft power attraction toward Japan and increase immigration and cultural attachment. Attractive resources are important parts of a national soft power strategy to improve image among foreign publics. Asian nations in particular, have been utilizing education as a resource for soft power influence and increase the attractiveness in a new soft-power rivalry in particular among the East Asian states of China, Korea, and Japan. In all the programs examined in this paper, language education seems most vital to the transferal of attraction toward the nation. In all three programs, language education plays an integral part as a necessary condition for improving image. Without the language, assimilation becomes very difficult and acquisition of deepening cultural understanding becomes impossible. In the nursing training program, it is clear that the largest reason for failure involved the lack of language education and the difficulties understanding nuanced language from the local culture as well as for the nursing/caregiving exam. In China’s case for Confucius Institutes as well, language education is the most important service provided (though this is not examined in this paper). In addition, the mandate and stated intent of the programs may alter their success. In the two educational programs, JET and the internationalization of higher education, the stated intention is to increase domestic multiculturalism among Japanese citizens. The effects of these programs, however, are very strong in their influence over the Japanese image for foreigners and the attraction that results. The alumni for both the international universities and the JET program maintain very strong ties to Japan. In the nursing program, however, the stated goal discusses the importance of bringing workers and laborers to help deal with the decreasing population. In this program, despite the stated goal, the program has failed to
achieve the results. In a sense, by stating the desire for foreign workers, the program limits the attractive power. Perhaps attraction must be generated more subtly.

Two programs designed as internationalizing Japan have greater effects on foreign populations attachment to Japan, while the one program designed specifically to bring foreigners to Japan largely fails at achieving its goals. Indirectly attracting individuals to Japan works better than directly attempting to import labor or workers from abroad. In addition, in order to bring foreign nationals to Japan to live and work, the acculturation is vital to the success of the program. Without adequate training in cultural norms and language, the individuals do not make a significant investment to treat Japan as viable living and working environment in the long-term.

This paper points to some interesting ideas that deserve further examination. First, cultural attraction requires language affinity between the target and the source. Second, attraction requires some subtlety of intention that is often desirable when using harder power resources to influence other actors. These two conditions on the success of soft power attractiveness need further examination to determine the extent to which they hold true for other cases and represent a more general understanding of how attraction works between nations and foreign populations.
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