The Role of Higher Education and Its Institutional Management at Aging Society

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The role of higher education is not only educating young generation who will become working adults but also serving for middles and seniors who wish to study at higher education institutions. The idea of lifelong learning has been an important notion which helps those who wish to develop their skills for their jobs as well as to enjoy cultural entertainment since in the middle of 20th century.
Each country has developed lifelong learning system and helped adults study at higher education institutions including universities and colleges. Japan is no exception. The Ministry of Education, Japan, set up the Bureau of Lifelong Learning in 1988 and has promoted various kinds of polies including access to higher education.
However, the number of adult students who study at universities and colleges has not been grown so much comparing with other OECD countries. This is due to a weak connection of higher education with job market as well as difficulty of access to the higher education for adults.

Percentage of freshmen whose age are over 25 years old

MEXT Data
The environment that surrounds lifelong learning system is now changing greatly. First, knowledge-based society. More people need the most recent knowledge and skills for their current jobs and also future jobs if they need to change their working places and fields. Higher education has a good position to train them from basic knowledge to the most sophisticated or practical ones.
A new type of university has just been proposed by the National Council on Education and this university deals with more practical knowledge and skills that will be directly connected with industry.
Second, aging society in Japan. Due to the problems with the declining birth rate and aging population, universities and colleges have a serious difficulty to recruit enough number of students and thus adult students are expected to supply a deficiency of students. In addition, the current aged people are well educated when they were young and thus they keep interest in various types of study. They are even expected to help universities and colleges reform themselves by stimulating young students to study more.
Population in Japan by Ages, 2012 and 2060
In this paper I will introduce and discuss some problems which must be overcome weakness of lifelong learning system in Japan in relation with higher education, which may help audience understand their own lifelong learning system deeper and better.
## Three Different Systems of Higher Education (HE)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Institution</th>
<th>Japan</th>
<th>The USA</th>
<th>European HE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4-year-University</td>
<td>Universities and Community Colleges</td>
<td>University and Technical College</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage of HE</td>
<td>Mass⇒ Universal</td>
<td>Universal</td>
<td>Elite⇒ Mass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degrees</td>
<td>Bachelor/Master/Doctor</td>
<td>Bachelor/Master/Doctor</td>
<td>First Degree/Doctor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctoral Training</td>
<td>Graduate School</td>
<td>Graduate School</td>
<td>Research Post</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of HE Inst</td>
<td>Public&lt;Private</td>
<td>Public&gt;Private</td>
<td>Mostly Public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuition and Fees</td>
<td>Charged</td>
<td>Charged</td>
<td>Free/charged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Education</td>
<td>Taught</td>
<td>Taught</td>
<td>None/little</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Funding</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Funding</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Funding</td>
<td>Education Ministry</td>
<td>Federal Gov.</td>
<td>Education Ministry Research Ministry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult Students</td>
<td>Few</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>Many</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Students</td>
<td>Few</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>Many</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value of Degree</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Higher Education for the YOUNGERS or NOT?

1. Japanese Way of Employment (Bachelors are the most desirable.)
2. Students want to be employed by big leading companies.
3. Universities’ strategy to appeal good results of employment
The Development of Higher Education in Japan

1. The First Modern University in 1886 (Imperial Univ.)
2. Expansion of Higher Education System in 1918 - 45
3. Reform after the War II
   Various kinds of HE Institutes became Universities.
4. Massification of HE in 1960s and 70s
   Quality and Managerial Problems
5. The 25-years Big Reform of HE since 1990s
   Why Reform and Why so FAST?
Decline of 18-year-old Population

thousand

New Students  18-year-olds

Recent Reports on University Reform (1)

National Council on Education, Jan. 2005
-- Future of Higher Education in Japan

1. Very important role at the age of knowledge-based society
2. Massification, Globalization, and Quality Assurance
3. Division of roles among institutions research intensive, teaching oriented, contribution to local development, etc.
Recent Reports on University Reform (2)

-- Graduate education at the new age

1. Quality improvement
coursework and research training

2. Clarify aims of graduate education
researchers working for univ. and industry
professionals working for business and others
Recent Reports on University Reform(7)

The Future Strategy for Higher Education
Committee on Rebuilding Capacity of Education,
(So-called ABE Educational Reform)

1. Improve Education for Globalization
2. Encourage Research for Innovation
3. Make Students Study More
4. Attract Adult Students
5. Governance and Managerial Reform