

## Benefits and drawbacks of Digital Learning

### I

Recently, techniques such as computers and tablets have developed rapidly. As a result, these machines are frequently used in school education now. In addition, students who could not go to school because of COVID-19 Pandemic in 2019, increased the demand for these technologies.<sup>1</sup> It is said that 49% of students have completed some form of online learning.<sup>2</sup> Governments in many countries such as South Korea, America, and Singapore allow the use of digital learning materials.<sup>3</sup> However, at the same time, students also use textbooks and notebooks like before the development of digital learning systems. In this essay, I will explain the benefits and drawbacks of digital learning and my opinion about the best way to study for students.

On the one hand, digital learning became popular in the world because of a lot of advantages. The biggest advantage is that students have a tablet or computer, they can study at home or while attending school. The average time that people use while going to work or school is more than 15 minutes.<sup>4</sup> It is a good way to use time without wasting it. Analog learning needs many things such as pencils, textbooks, and notebooks. In addition, if teachers and students are in different positions, they can make connections online. In case of an emergency like COVID-19 pandemic, teachers can teach and confirm student's work. Also, there is so much the latest information on websites, but information on textbooks is not updated after major events in society. For example, Japanese elementary and junior high school textbooks are remade every

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<sup>1</sup> Haleem, Abid, Javaid, Mohd, Qadri, Mohd Asim, and Suman, Rajiv, "Understanding the role of digital technologies in education: A review," ScienceDirect, 2022

<sup>2</sup> Peck, Devlin, "Online Learning Statistics: The Ultimate List in 2024," Devlin Peck, 2024

<sup>3</sup> Unknown, "The use of digital textbooks and teaching materials in other countries," Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, 2021

<sup>4</sup> The SASI group and Newman, Mark, "Commuting time," The university of Sheffield

four years.<sup>5</sup> Most news is available for free, so learners can easily make use of them in their learning.

On the other hand, there are some disadvantages. One of the bad points is that students can not prepare for actual performances. If students study to pass exams, they are not able to improve their problem solving skills in the same situations as with a real test. The reason why is that, unlike online study methods, there are still many analogue examination formats. It takes a lot more time to write something on paper than typing on a computer. That is one of the advantages of using digital devices, but if they use those, they may not be able to figure out questions within the specified time. Also there is another drawback. It is said that handwriting helps memorization by actually doing hands-on work rather than typing.<sup>6</sup> That is why they do not use computers, they can study more efficiently in a short time. Typing is a simple action on a keyboard, so the movement and visual information provided is extremely low from it.

In conclusion, there are benefits and drawbacks of digital education. Digital media based learning is studied in many countries because teachers and students can learn in various environments. However, it may not be dependent on students' learning objectives. In my opinion, reading digital textbooks to get knowledge has good effects on students, but students have to take notes in notebooks. By doing so, students can use the benefits of both analog and digital, and learn effectively. Digital education is very useful, but people have to recognize that there are a lot of benefits about analog one too. Therefore, it is wrong to be biased to only one method of education.

## II

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<sup>5</sup> Unknown, "Textbook Q&A," Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology

<sup>6</sup> Storey, Denis, "Handwriting Shows Unexpected Benefits Over Typing," Psychiatrist.com, 2024

“That so many children and young people have no internet at home is more than a digital gap; it is a digital canyon,” said Henrietta Fore, UNICEF Executive Director.<sup>7</sup> Recently, the internet has become essential to life, and education is no exception. A lot of schools started to use digital learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and students have more opportunities to use computers.<sup>8</sup> However, all of the students in this world don’t get the same education. In this essay, I will describe the disparities in digital learning and solutions in three areas, international, regional, and individual. Also I will consider how society will face digital learning in the future as a summary.

First of all, I will explain the disparities in online learning between countries of the world. Online classes are being offered in 65% of high income countries, but only 18% in low income countries.<sup>9</sup> In western countries, the 96% percentage of people using the internet has increased since 2000.<sup>10</sup> Additionally, in European countries, more than 90% of homes have access to the internet.<sup>11</sup> This made it possible to flexibly introduce online classes when the COVID-19 pandemic occurred. However, internet penetration in African countries is 43% and it is under the global average.<sup>12</sup> One of the reasons for this number is due to the lack of ICT engineers, making it more difficult to provide internet access than in other countries. To solve this problem, infrastructure development is necessary. Currently, the environment for online learning is still not in place. However, if there is a basic environment with access to the internet, students can use smartphones to access enough information.

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<sup>7</sup> Unknown, “Two thirds of the world’s school-age children have no internet access at home, new UNICEF-ITU report says,” unicef, 2020

<sup>8</sup> J S Gopika, R V Rekha “Awareness and Use of Digital Learning Before and During COVID-19,”National Library of Medicine, 2023

<sup>9</sup> Tokyo newspaper Sunday, “Digital education disparities” highlighted by the COVID-19 pandemic: large differences based on income and region, increased burden on teachers and staff... how can these be resolved?” Tokyo Sucusuku, 2020

<sup>10</sup> Unknown, ”Internet, Broadband Fact Sheet,” Pew Research Center, 2024

<sup>11</sup> Petrosyan, Ani, “Internet usage in Europe,” statista, 2024

<sup>12</sup> Galal, Saifaddin, “Internet usage in Africa - statistics & facts,”statista, 2024

Next, there are disparities between regions within the country. This time, I will explain the regional disparities within Japan as an example. A big difference between regional disparities and international ones is that the internet is available in most places in Japan, but disparities still exist. The reason for this is utilization rate. The rate of the main metropolitan areas in Japan such as Tokyo, Osaka, and Fukuoka is high from 80% to 90%. On the other hand, the Tohoku area includes Aomori, Akita and prefectures which have lower populations like Shimane at around 70%.<sup>13</sup> This difference is from interests for the internet. In the countryside there are many old age people and those people are not interested in social media or information online. Since COVID-19 pandemic, the Japanese government decided to use computers in every public elementary and junior high school and teachers were forced to teach students with these items.<sup>14</sup> Some elderly teachers may not be computer literate. As a result, there are also differences in device usage rates.<sup>15</sup> That is why, developing technology that is easy for children and teachers who are not familiar with the Internet to use will be a good solution for this problem. If they can use computers like textbooks or notebooks, the difference of rate between areas may disappear.

The last topic is individual disparities, which arise from different situations such as home network environment and income. The ICT spread rate in households with a total income of less than 2 million yen is very low at 33%.<sup>16</sup> Some local governments are providing support to such families, but more than half are still considering ways to address the issue, and a quick response is not expected. This situation is very similar to the international disparity, but since this problem is occurring within one country, a small scale solution can be used. Using common learning

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<sup>13</sup> Unknown, "Part 2: Basic data and policy trends," Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, 2020

<sup>14</sup> Unknown, "Realizing the GIGA School Initiative," Ministry of education, culture, sports, science and technology -Japan

<sup>15</sup> Unknown, "Digital education, device operation to be implemented by prefectures to correct disparities in classes," Nikkei, 2024

<sup>16</sup> Tokyo newspaper Sunday, "Digital education disparities" highlighted by the COVID-19 pandemic: large differences based on income and region, increased burden on teachers and staff... how can these be resolved?" Tokyo Sucusuku, 2020

materials such as data and textbooks that can be used for both digital and analog learning. A cause of this problem is that the information needed to learn is only available online. A way to solve this is to provide the same information to students who have the environment for digital learning and others who have difficulty doing so. In Japan, the environment is in place where all children can go to school, so as long as the learning materials are provided, everyone can receive the same education.

In conclusion, online learning on three scales - international, regional, and individual - each has its own problems. Solutions must be considered according to the scale. However, this learning method was only fully adopted about five years ago because of COVID 19, so I believe that better measures will be provided by the government and local governments, and this field will continue to grow in the future. As a student who uses computers a lot in class, I think digital learning is very convenient and makes profits, so I hope that students all over the world can receive the same level of learning.

### III

Recently, the style of learning has changed because of developments of technology in the environment for educational purposes. Digital learning, which uses personal computers or tablets, rapidly spread around the world after the pandemic of Covid 19. According to the analysis by Mr. Means, online learning effects are almost ecorill with face-to-face learning. On the other hand, traditional learning that studies with textbook, notebook, and pencil is still adopted in a lot of schools. Mueller and Oppenheimer stated that students' scores increase approximately 5 to 10 percent because of the handwriting note. These two ways of learning are totally different at roles and looks, but there are common points and issues for each one. In this

essay, I would like to compare something that these have in common and different points, and consider the diversity of the learning in current society.

There are some similarities between digital and traditional learning. First, both of the ways share the basic purpose of getting knowledge and deeper understanding, and guidance by teachers and taking note are essential. Contrary to the research results I have already shown, there are also studies that show that there is no difference in learning outcomes between the two types of learning. Also, Frontiers magazine survey of environmental science classes also showed that there was no difference for students' marks between online and in-person classes regardless of gender or grade. In this way, if both are designed and implemented correctly, the learning effect could be reached at the same level.

However, tools used and psychological effects associated with it have significant gaps. There are surveys reported that people had higher scores due to handwriting notes at the comprehension test than keyboard record. The reason is that people are more likely to type exactly what they listened to when they take notes with a keyboard. Therefore, the processes which organize and summarize are eliminated, so establishing memories or deep understanding might be weak. In addition, some students have an opinion such as "Compared to face-to-face classes, online classes using Zoom often involve only looking at the slides and hearing the professor's words, making it harder to concentrate than in regular lectures." It becomes difficult to concentrate as information is continuously transmitted in one direction through a screen. Conversely, in traditional classrooms, the key to promoting concentration is "Instant feedback" Immediate feedback enhances concentration and learning effectiveness. For example, a study involving nursing students showed a marked improvement in concentration after using a "two-stage instant feedback assessment model". This model allows students to answer questions and

then immediately review the correct answers and explanations. Face-to-face classes situations are similar to this model.

Digital and analog learning have common points in terms of purpose and outcomes, but there are obvious differences in memory methods, environment, and concentration and one is not absolutely superior to the other. Several empirical studies support the conclusion that while online learning alone can be effective, a blended approach which mixes both of these learning produces the best results.

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Unknown, "Part 2: Basic data and policy trends," Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, 2020, accessed January 14, 2025, <https://www.soumu.go.jp/johotsusintokei/whitepaper/ja/r02/html/nd252120.html>

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Deficiency of Japanese English Education

I

According to the EF English Proficiency Index, Japan's ranking of English level among 113 non-native speaker countries and areas is 87th out of them and 15th out of Asian countries.<sup>1</sup> This research was ranked by the system of English education and it evaluates students' English proficiency globally, and also the ranking has been declining in recent years, so that is obvious the decrease in the level of English in the young generation. Moreover, only 10.7% of people have confidence in their English with the highest percentage in Tokyo at 20%.<sup>2</sup> Based on these facts, Japanese people have a weakness in English. On the other hand, the education standard ranked as high-quality in terms of mathematical literacy, scientific literacy, and reading comprehension.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, the result improved before COVID-19 even though the students could not attend school. Therefore, Japan's education system is at the top level everywhere except for English. Recently, globalization has been accelerated in the world, and Japan also has the power to compete with other countries such as innovation, business, and economics<sup>4,5</sup>. However, the EF English Proficiency Index proved the education system of English is low level and it is associated with the lack of confidence to speak English. Hence, this essay will focus on two main causes of Japanese people having problems speaking English based on a lack of pronunciation training and speaking time in the Japanese English school education system.

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<sup>1</sup> EF English Proficiency Index, "EF English Proficiency Index by Country 2024", World Population Review, 2023

<sup>2</sup> Daichi Matsuoka, "Only 10% of Japanese confident in their English: Duolingo survey", The Mainichi, 2024

<sup>3</sup> NHK, "International Survey of Children's Achievement Japan rises in the rankings to the world's top level", NHK, 2023

<sup>4</sup> Asahi Shimbun Media Business Bureau, "Nippon, The Realities of Global Human Resources", Asahi Shimbun, 2019

<sup>5</sup> Asahi Shimbun Media Business Bureau, "Nippon, The Realities of Global Human Resources", Asahi Shimbun, 2019

The cause is a shortage of practising English pronunciation. Basically, there is a big gap in language between English and Japanese. For example, there are five vowels in Japanese but English has fifteen vowels.<sup>6</sup> By having three times as many, Japanese learners of English get confused, and many people can not catch the vowels correctly. Additionally, Japanese has letters which are called Katakana, and they have been used to replace foreign languages with Japanese<sup>7</sup>. Unfortunately, there is a serious problem even changing to Japanese, the vowels are still Japanese, and the Japanese believe that is English, so they can not communicate, which is called Katakana English. Katakana does not completely reproduce English pronunciation and sounds are Japanese localization, which can lead to the acquisition of incorrect pronunciation habits when learning English. Nevertheless, children do not learn this skill in school<sup>8</sup>. According to the International Phonetic Association, Machi Okamura said the teachers do not teach communicative English. In the English class, teachers speak and teach Katakana English, and they do not teach English vowels, so children do not know the proper English pronunciation. Over 60% of people who study English do not want to speak English because they do not have the confidence to pronounce it<sup>9</sup>. They feel that they are not comfortable with public speaking. Therefore, Japanese people do not learn how to pronounce English correctly, specifically vowels and it is related to lack of confidence to speak English and people do not speak well.

The second cause is the lack of practice in speaking English. Statistically, the required time to speak English fluently is around 3000 hours<sup>10</sup>. This is established by the foreign service intuition, American intuition, and the definition of the necessary time to get general skill in terms

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<sup>6</sup> Gabby, “*nihonjin no eigohatsuon ga tsujinai noha naze ? nihonjin ga nigate na eigon to hatsuonkaizenhoho wo kaisetsu*”, Gabby, 2024

<sup>7</sup> Site-Master, “*nihonjin ni totte eigo no hatsuon ga muzukashiku kanjiru noha katakanaeigo no sei nanja naino ?*”, I've tried online English conversation!, 2018

<sup>8</sup> Machi Okamura, “『*nihon kara naze hatsuonshido ga kietanoka*』”, PRONTEST Inc, 2023

<sup>9</sup> Sao.K, “【*hiho*】*6 wariijo ga hatsuon ni jishin ga naikara [eigo de hanashitakunai] to motteiru.*”, Cafetalk, 2022

<sup>10</sup> QQ English, “*eikaiwashutoku ni hitsuyo na jikan ha ! ? gakushujikambetsu no kokateki na eigobenkyoho ha kore !*”, QQ English 2023

of speaking and listening. However, from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology survey in 2022, the speaking time in one lesson, was 65.9% in elementary school, 49.9% in junior high school and 48.2% in high school and the percentage of more than half of the teachers talking are in English was 49.9% in junior high school and 48.2% in high school.<sup>11</sup> As a result, the speaking time allocated to one lesson was dropped at each grade year. The background is that a proportion of teachers have anxiety about managing English and do not work well, as about 56.8% and 78.7% of teachers feel difficult to teach to speak. Applied linguist, Tyugi Sen mentioned that in speaking, it is very important for teachers to be models and show children how to use English actively to stimulate their curiosity and interest and if teachers become models, they are going to be students' aspirations<sup>12</sup>. However, the environment does not exist in Japan. Hence, children lack the opportunity to speak English and also almost all teachers do not have enough skills in English speaking classes, so children face big problems in having enough time to speak English.

In conclusion, this essay stated two reasons why Japanese people have a weak point in speaking English in terms of the lack of practice in English vowels and speaking time in the English curriculum of Japanese schools. One cause is the shortage of practising vowels. In Japanese schools, teachers do not teach the English vowels even though there are a lot of reasons people get confused in English, and also teachers speak in Japanese English called Katakana English. Katakana replaced English with Japanese, but the sounds are still Japanese. Therefore, people do not learn the correct English pronunciation. Therefore they do not want to speak English due lack of confidence in pronunciation. The second cause is that students lack time to speak English. They have to spend a lot of time speaking English, but the speaking time is

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<sup>11</sup> Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, "reiwa 4nendo eigokyoiku jisshijokyo chosa", Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, 2022

<sup>12</sup> Tyugi Sen, "*nihon no koto motachi no supikinguryoku ka yowai riyu*", Kidsup, 2024

declining yearly, so they lack training in English. Additionally, the teachers have problems operating English speaking classes, so there are even more problems in Japanese led English classes. Therefore, people in Japan have a low level of English, especially in their speaking skills. I hope increasing time of practising time and speaking time becomes key to augmentation of the young generation's English level.

## II

According to the World Populate Review, the percentage of Japanese literacy level is 99% and 28th out of 184 countries<sup>13</sup>. This means the quality of the Japanese education system is high and permeates the Japanese people. Literacy level is defined by how many of the population can read, write, and understand a letter<sup>14</sup>. It is calculated from people over fifteen years old, so it is a suitable indicator for assessing the education level. However, the regional sales and marketing director at Education First Japan, Norihiko Inoue said "Japanese are very good at English grammar and reading, but they are not good at English communication".<sup>15</sup> Japanese people have abundant grammar knowledge and vocabulary, but they are not good at speaking English and they avoid speaking English. This essay will demonstrate the advantages and disadvantages of the Japanese English education system in terms of visual education, examination culture and the independence of the Japanese and loss of motivation.

The advantage of the Japanese English education system is effective visual teaching and test culture. Firstly, the English education system is that teachers teach basic English grammar in Japanese, allowing students to grasp even advanced concepts with ease.<sup>16</sup> Japanese and English grammar are different, so this way is effective for learning English, furthermore, there are few

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<sup>13</sup> WORLD POPULATE REVIEW, "Literacy Rate by Country 2024", WORLD POPULATION REVIEW, 2024

<sup>14</sup> Spaceship Erth Edition, "*shikijiritsutoha? sekai nihonno genjo to 2022nen rankingu, moji ga yomenai todonaru?*", Spaceship Erth, 2023

<sup>15</sup> Margolis Eric, "Japan Doesn't Want to Become Another Casualty of English English skills bring status, but the public remains stubbornly bad at learning.", FP, 2020

<sup>16</sup> Syuhei Ogawa, "*eigo kyoikuno rekishitekitenkai ni mirareru sonotokucho to chosho*", Morioka univercity, 2017

opportunities for exposure to English in Japan, consequently that way has been evaluated. Moreover, this system makes it easy for English beginners to stay motivated.<sup>17</sup> Learning English in Japanese reduces the psychological burden, offering a step by step approach suitable for beginners. Additionally, the Japanese testing culture fosters consistent improvement in English skills and keeps students engaged. However, some lose interest after achieving their goals for the test.<sup>18</sup> Almost all students have to take exams, especially when they apply to universities, and then they need to learn all about the textbooks, which makes them consolidate learning. In addition, they learn huge vocabulary, grammar, and reading comprehension skills, and they can get skills in understanding English texts efficiently, which are enhanced through long reading comprehension questions and training in processing large numbers of English texts. Therefore, teaching English in Japanese and the emphasis on exams particularly help students develop strong reading skills.

The disadvantage of the Japanese English education system is that Japanese students rely heavily on Japanese when they use English and they lose motivation. While teaching English in Japanese helps beginners, it also creates a reliance on translation that hinders spoken communication, and that is not efficient for using English.<sup>19</sup> The system is good for understanding English, but it makes speaking English challenging and unnatural. Moreover, they are required to achieve perfect translations during exams. As a result, they often construct sentences in Japanese first, striving for flawless accuracy, which hampers their fluency in speaking. For example, if they want to say “Import and export are essential for the industry.” they get confused without these words, and then they can not communicate smoothly. They also

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<sup>17</sup> Mayu Tsukawaki, “*gurobaruka to nihonno eigokyoiku —komyunikeshonshiko no kanten kara—*”, Kyoto Woman’s University, 2014

<sup>18</sup> Megumi Okano, “*gurobaruujinzaikyoku ni motomerareru eigokyoiku to daigakunyushimondai*”, Taisyo University, 2017

<sup>19</sup> Kouiti Koyanagi, “**【nihon no eigokyoiku】korega zetsubotekimondaiten to zettaiteki kaikakuan da !**”, THE ENGLISH CLUB, 2024

care about whether the sentence is perfect or not, and they do not have the confidence to speak English. Furthermore, some students think the goal of English education is passing an exam.<sup>20</sup> They can not keep motivated to improve their English skills. Thus, they have a habit of translating English, and it disturbs them to speak English and it is hard to motivate them to study English after the test.

In conclusion, this essay stated the advantages and disadvantages of Japanese English education. One advantage is that students can understand English concepts deeply because teachers instruct in Japanese and it is good for English beginners, furthermore, they can be motivated because of the examination culture. On the other hand, the drawback of English education in Japan is that they are independent of Japanese. They develop a habit of thinking in Japanese first, which disrupts their ability to use English naturally, especially in speaking. Besides, in exams, they are required to translate in Japanese perfectly and it makes them anxious because they care about building perfect English grammar. In my opinion, Japanese English education is effective which makes them deeply understand English grammar, but the students rely on it a lot, thus the Japanese education system should be well balanced. Nowadays, education is biased toward understanding English like learning grammar, so they should spend more time using English such as in English conversation. For example, setting up a one-hour conversation exercise.

### III

50.2% of Japanese English level is beginners <sup>21</sup>. According to PROGOS, which is an English-speaking test using the AI system, and analysed 420,000 Japanese English levels. As a result, 50.2% of people are A2 level, which is beginner level, and intermediate level people are

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<sup>20</sup> Nobu Takeda, “*nihon no eigokyoiku no mondaiten 7tsu | motokyoshi ga kaigai no seikojirei mo kaisetsu*”, Kyouiku Kuesto, 2025

<sup>21</sup> Ke Long, “*jitsuyo reberu no eikaiwaryoku, nihonjin ha wazuka 7% minkanshirabe*”, 2024,

25%, and only 7% of people are fluent level. However, the education level is recognised as high-level, especially in math skills. The PISA score that evaluates math literacy is in 3rd place in the world<sup>22</sup> and this means the Japanese math education level is one of the top levels in the world. Therefore, this issue is not the fault of the whole Japanese education system, this is only the Japanese English education system. This essay will state how they can progress in Japanese English skills in terms of the period of starting learning English and the completeness of pronunciation practice.

The first key is when they start learning English. For Japanese people, 2,200 hours are required to speak English fluently, so it is important when they start learning<sup>23</sup>. In Japan, they start studying English at 9 years old, but they have to start earlier. There is a beneficial example. According to the British Council, 94% of Dutch people can speak another language, and children start studying from 4 or 5 years old. In the Netherlands, almost all schools teach English, so it can be said that a large population of people start learning English from a young age<sup>24</sup>. For young students, they teach fun English through English games and songs. Because of this, they can become accustomed to English like watching English TV or films with subtitles and not using dubbing<sup>25</sup>. This is a good point to have fun in English from a young age, because of that they are not likely to be intimidated by English. They do not think they have to study because English is the main subject. Moreover, children, especially those under 5 years old, can distinguish English sounds at a time called the critical period<sup>26</sup>. At that time, children are sensitive to sounds, so they

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<sup>22</sup> WORLD POPULATION REVIEW, “PISA scores by country 2025”, 2025

<sup>23</sup> TORAIZ, “shakaijin no eigoshutoku ni hitsuyo na jikan ha 1000jikan ! benkyojikan no kakuhohoho mo kaisetsu”, 2025

<sup>24</sup> David Hayes, “Factors influencing success in teaching English in state primary schools”, 2024

<sup>25</sup> Reisuke, “kokumin no 94% ga bairingaruru ! ? naze oranda no eigoryoku ha hieigoken de toppunano ?”, 2024

<sup>26</sup> PASONA, “yoji ya kodomo no eigokyoiku ha hitsuyo ? merito • demeritto to eigogakushuhoho wo kaisetsu”, 2024

can distinguish more clearly even difficult sounds for Japanese, such as R and L sounds. Therefore, they must start studying English earlier.

The second key is practising pronunciation. When they have good pronunciation, they can listen to the words, and they can communicate in English<sup>27</sup>. Therefore, this training is essential for English studies. Nevertheless, they do not learn this in Japanese schools. About 80% of students answered that they never studied pronunciation because they focused on English grammar or words in Japanese schools<sup>28</sup>, and this makes it hard to study English if they do not know the sounds, they struggle to remember the words and listen and this affects speaking. They do not understand what people say, and they can not communicate with them. Furthermore, they can have confidence in proper pronunciation<sup>29</sup>. They can understand each other, and they are motivated to talk more by improving their pronunciation. Hence, pronunciation is vital for studying English. Then, they should introduce the Fonix study. This method is used in English countries, and they can learn how to pronounce it. 84% of words can be adapted by this method<sup>30</sup>, and they can understand the proper sounds of English.

In conclusion, to improve English in Japanese, they need early learning and practice of pronunciation. Firstly, it is said they need 2200 hours to speak English fluently, so it is valuable to start learning English from a young age. In the Netherlands, they start learning from 4-5 years old, and lots of students get familiar with English. Therefore, it is important to start studying from a young age in Japan as well. Secondly, they have to practice pronunciation. A certain percentage of Japanese people do not know how to pronounce words correctly. It has a crucial

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<sup>27</sup> Money English, “【hatsuongakushu ha atomawashi ? ! 】puroeigokochi ga kataru, hatsuongakushu no juyosei”, 2023

<sup>28</sup> Ota Kairi, “nihon no eigokakyoiku ni okeru onseishido no genjo — shokieigokyoiku ni okeru onseikyoiku no donyu oyobi sono kyojuho no kakuritsu wo mezashite—”, Date unknown

<sup>29</sup> Sankei online Eikaiwa plus, “eigo no hatsuonrenshu ni kansuru chishiki ! renshu subeki riyu ya hoho wokaisetsu”, 2024,

<sup>30</sup> Hosokawa, “< tsujiru eigo wo hanashitai kata he > katakanaeigo kara sotsugyo dekiru, 84 no ruru toha”, Digital Naregi, 2019

effect on studying English. For example, if they know how to pronounce, they can understand communication, and they can communicate as well. Moreover, having good pronunciation contributes to having confidence. In my opinion, when they start learning English earlier, they can improve more like the successful example in the Netherlands, and they can improve more by practising English pronunciation, and I hope Japanese people will progress their English skills.

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## The issue of English education in Japan

### I

“In 2023, Japan dropped to 87th in the world in the survey of English ability.” according to the EF.<sup>1</sup> Recently, the skill of English in Japan is going down compared to other countries. Even the neighboring country, South Korea, is 49th in the world.<sup>2</sup> Looking around 80th to 90th countries like Myanmar and Kyrgyzstan, most of them are not developed countries.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, it is harder for everyone to study English than developed countries like Japan. According to CEFR which can distinguish 6 levels of English speaking skill, only 7 percent of Japanese people can speak English at a level of B2 or higher.<sup>4</sup> Even though they start to learn English from elementary school through high school. They study it for about 12 years. In this essay I will discuss the reason for this issue by separating three main points: the education system, physical cultural problems, and psychological problems.

One of the biggest causes of this problem is how English is taught at school. According to the writer, KK Miller, most Japanese students are studying English for their test so they don't learn it for themselves.<sup>5</sup> When people enter high school or university, they usually take some exams such as math, science, Japanese, social study and English. Then, most English tests are multiple choice-test. Therefore, they don't have to make sentences by themselves. In addition, the environment like teachers and textbooks are also not so good. At first, most teachers are not native speakers. According to the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and

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<sup>1</sup> EF, “The world’s largest ranking of countries and regions by English skills”, EF, 2023

<sup>2</sup> EF, “The world’s largest ranking of countries and regions by English skills”, EF, 2023

<sup>3</sup> HOKKAIDO UNIVERSITY, “87th in the world”, HOKKAIDO UNIVERSITY, February 21, 2024

<sup>4</sup> Rare Job, “Survey of 660,000(\*1) data on the actual English speaking ability of Japanese people”, Rare Job, June 17, 2024

<sup>5</sup> KK Miller, “What’s wrong with English education in Japan? Pull up a chair”, Japan Today, October 7, 2014

Technology, only 9.7 percent of English teachers are from other countries.<sup>6</sup> Also, 48.7 percent of Japanese teachers have never experienced studying abroad.<sup>7</sup> They focus on teaching grammar and vocabulary. The reason why they focus on grammar or vocabulary is usually, students don't take speaking tests at school. As I said before, the survey of English speaking skill in Japan is terrible. 30 percent of people are A2 HIGH level, and this level is the same as a beginner.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, grammar that is used in textbooks is very confusing, and most topics in reading are boring so it's hard to read everything.

It is also related to Japanese physical and cultural problems. Look at the place of Japan, it is an island so there are less opportunities to speak English except for famous cities like Tokyo and Osaka.<sup>9</sup> In famous cities, there are a lot of landmarks so it's easy to attract foreigners. On the other hand, in the countryside, it's really difficult to use other foreign languages as well as English. In addition, Japan has a history of not entering foreign countries for over 200 years, and traveling to foreign countries was permitted just 60 years ago.<sup>10</sup> Therefore, there is no necessity to learn a second language. The other one is katakana pronunciation.<sup>11</sup> When Japanese people learn English, they translate words in katakana because it's very difficult to pronounce them for Japanese. For instance, "read" translated in katakana is "リード". However, it also means "rido". Therefore, katakana and English are totally different so it's hard for foreign people to understand their English.

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<sup>6</sup> Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, "English Language Education Implementation Status Survey (High Schools)", Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, 2016

<sup>7</sup> Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, "English Language Education Implementation Status Survey (High Schools)", Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, 2016

<sup>8</sup> Rare Job, "Survey of 660,000(\*1) data on the actual English speaking ability of Japanese people", Rare Job, June 17, 2024

<sup>9</sup> Japan Dev Team, "Do people speak English in Japan? Here's what you need to know", Japan Dev, September 5, 2023

<sup>10</sup> Japan Dev Team, "Do people speak English in Japan? Here's what you need to know", Japan Dev, September 5, 2023

<sup>11</sup> Author unknown, "Katakanization: The Secret Rules of Converting English into Japanese", TOFUGU, date unknown

Most Japanese people feel embarrassed about making a mistake when speaking English.<sup>12</sup> When people take an English exam, there is always a right and wrong answer, so they demand perfect answers. By nature, Japan has a culture where people are scared to make a mistake and to do new things. Therefore, they can not get a good confidence to speak English. Moreover, as I said before, they usually study English for their exam so they do not have enough motivation.<sup>13</sup> Those things pretend to improve other languages abilities, especially speaking skills. “Societal pressure to conform and succeed can also contribute to the psychological barriers faced by Japanese English learners,” said Himanshu Jain. It is not only English, but also students have a lot of pressure socially and academically such as entrance exams and creating high results. According to Bunkyo university, 70 percent of students have some daily stress and they have the most stress about studying.<sup>14</sup> Himanshu Jain said, “This pressure may lead them to focus more on achieving high scores in written exams rather than on developing practical speaking skills.”<sup>15</sup>

In this essay, I discussed the cause of English education in Japan. To begin with, it has an issue for how to teach English and the material of it. The majority of people do not study English to improve their skill, and also material such as textbooks and grammar are very complicated. This problem is also related to the part of Japanese physical and psychological. First of all, Japan is an island and there is a difference of the variety of foreign people between city and countryside so most people do not have to learn a second language. Moreover, they have a culture of being perfectly by nature so they do not say their opinion up willingly. In my opinion, it is difficult for Japanese people to learn English but there are a lot of advantages to acquiring English. Nowadays, most people in the world can speak English and after COVID-19, more and more

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<sup>12</sup> WIZWORDS, “Why Are Japanese People's English Proficiency Levels So Low? Uncovering Problems in Education and Culture”, Note, July 22, 2024

<sup>13</sup> Himanshu Jain, “Why do Japanese Have Difficulty Speaking English”, EJable, June 12, 2024

<sup>14</sup> Yamagishi Sayaka, “Stress Situation of College Students”, Bunkyo University, March, 2009

<sup>15</sup> Himanshu Jain, “Why do Japanese Have Difficulty Speaking English”, EJable, June 12, 2024

Foreign tourists are coming to Japan. However, it is true that Japanese English education is bad. Therefore, the government should change this education system as soon as possible.

## II

“It’s not that Japan’s English ability is declining, but rather that Japan is not keeping pace with the progress made in other countries.”<sup>16</sup> said the Japanese legal person of EF. Nowadays, the English ability of Japan refuses to stop decreasing, and there were three main causes that I discussed in the last essay: the education system, physical and cultural problems and psychological issues. In 2024, EF uploaded the ranking of English skill by each country and Japan dropped from 87th in 2023 to 92th again.<sup>17</sup> Even though Japan fell lower and lower, People aged 18-25 of English ability are significantly lower than those aged more than 26.<sup>18</sup> Obviously, it means Japan has a massive issue with education policy. In this essay to understand, I will discuss three countries: Hong Kong (China), South Korea, and Vietnam in terms of English level and education policy.

One Asian Country that has good English skill is Hong Kong. Initially, Hong Kong is 32nd worldwide, according to EF.<sup>19</sup> The country was a colony of the U.K. by nature until 1997 so they have a culture to learn a second language especially English.<sup>20</sup> Since the country developed, the government made a policy which is called, “the biliterate trilingual policy”, and students are taught about two written languages of Modern Standard Chinese and English, and three spoken languages of Cantonese, Mandarin and English.<sup>21</sup> Moreover, they usually start to learn English

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<sup>16</sup> Rogers Krista, “Japan reaches its lowest-ever ranking on Education First’s 2024 English Proficiency Index”, Japan Today, November 19, 2024

<sup>17</sup> EF, “The world’s largest ranking of countries and regions by English skills”, EF, 2024

<sup>18</sup> Rogers Krista, “Japan reaches its lowest-ever ranking on Education First’s 2024 English Proficiency Index”, Japan Today, November 19, 2024

<sup>19</sup> EF, “The world’s largest ranking of countries and regions by English skills”, EF, 2024

<sup>20</sup> Carrigan Liam, “What Japan Can Learn From Hong Kong”, GaijinPot Blog, July 27, 2014

<sup>21</sup> Poon Anita, “Language policy of Hong Kong: Its impact on language education and language use in post-handover Hong Kong”, ResearchGate, January, 2004

from kindergarten to university. Meanwhile, it is started mostly from grade 5 to high school in Japan so this means Hong Kong is pretty early for studying a new language.<sup>22</sup> Actually, some experts agree that there is a crucial period of learning languages.<sup>23</sup> According to Erin E. Hannon who is a Doctor of Experimental Psychology, “The younger you are when you acquire a second language, the less it will interfere with your native language.”<sup>24</sup> Therefore, Hong Kong has taken this idea in their language policy.

South Korea has similar conditions with Japan for example, grammar is totally different compared to English and they also have their own first language, but even in that kind of situation, South Korea ranked 50th in 2024.<sup>25</sup> There are some clear differences between South Korea and Japan. Initially, students are taught English from grade 3 and they can choose if they take English class or not.<sup>26</sup> However, most of them know that English is an important thing in their future job. Consequently, most people also take English in high school. In general, Japanese people prefer to learn English in a small class because they are afraid to make mistakes. On the other hand, large classes are typical in Korea and everyone insists on their opinions freely.<sup>27</sup> According to the survey by the Korea Research Institute for Vocational Education and Training, the average time of Korean students study English per week was around 3.94 hours.<sup>28</sup> This result means that South Korea cares about people's English skill extremely. A job search website

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<sup>22</sup> Carrigan Liam, “What Japan Can Learn From Hong Kong”, GaijinPot Blog, July 27, 2014

<sup>23</sup> Regalia Liz, “What’s the best age to learn a new language? What experts want parents to know”, Care., October 16, 2023

<sup>24</sup> Regalia Liz, “What’s the best age to learn a new language? What experts want parents to know”, Care., October 16, 2023

<sup>25</sup> EF, “The world’s largest ranking of countries and regions by English skills”, EF, 2024

<sup>26</sup> Shin Yoonjae, “EF 2024 English Language Proficiency Index No. 1 in the Netherlands for 6 consecutive years. Singapore on Asia Line 50th in Korea and 91st in China”, Maeil Business Newspaper, November 18, 2024

<sup>27</sup> Shin Yoonjae, “EF 2024 English Language Proficiency Index No. 1 in the Netherlands for 6 consecutive years. Singapore on Asia Line 50th in Korea and 91st in China”, Maeil Business Newspaper, November 18, 2024

<sup>28</sup> British Council, “South Korean college students spend more time studying English than they do studying for their majors, a state-run research body said Sunday”, British Council, March 31, 2014

called “Saramin” shows a survey about how many local companies care about applicants' English level, and the result was 69.3%.<sup>29</sup>

The third country, Vietnam, is the closest country to Japan in the ranking of English skill by EF which was 63th of 116 countries in 2024.<sup>30</sup> This country has a bit of a different learning language policy compared to Japan. As usual, they start to study English from elementary school to high school, besides there are many experts in English who have a qualification.<sup>31</sup> In addition, people often include a cultural part of western Europe as they learn English.<sup>32</sup> By learning this, people can understand what European business or customs are like easily, and also it is related to the relationship between Vietnam and other countries in world politics. As for business, Luong Tu Anh who is CEO of Mat Bao BPO, a leading business process outsourcing company said most companies demand applicants to have English ability more than B2 level.<sup>33</sup> The survey which was caught out by Navigos Group illustrated that 60 percent of job offers demand English skills. Furthermore, it could mean that people who have a high level of English can get more salary than people else.<sup>34</sup>

In this essay, I discussed how different the other countries' English level is with Japan. First of all, Hong Kong was a colony of the U.K, so they have a culture to study English by nature. Moreover, they have a policy, called “the biliterate trilingual policy” that means learn three languages: English, Mandarin and Cantonies. South Korea's language has a similar structure to Japanese so the level of getting English skills is almost the same. However, Korean people are not often afraid of making mistakes so they always share their opinions. South Korea

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<sup>29</sup> British Council, “South Korean college students spend more time studying English than they do studying for their majors, a state-run research body said Sunday”, British Council, March 31, 2014

<sup>30</sup> EF, “The world’s largest ranking of countries and regions by English skills”, EF, 2024

<sup>31</sup> Away, “English proficiency and the English education in Vietnam”, Away, November 17, 2024

<sup>32</sup> Away, “English proficiency and the English education in Vietnam”, Away, November 17, 2024

<sup>33</sup> Uyen Nguyen, “Decline of English Center Giant Spells Opportunity for FDI”, Vietnam Briefing, June 28, 2023

<sup>34</sup> Uyen Nguyen, “Decline of English Center Giant Spells Opportunity for FDI”, Vietnam Briefing, June 28, 2023

and Vietnam have one thing which most job offers care about applicants' English abilities. Elsewhere, Vietnamese people also learn western European culture while studying English because these things are getting connected to the future business and world relationships. In this way, even people who have a completely different first language can learn English and those three countries are learning English by using their own way and their countries' policies. Therefore, Japanese people also can raise their ability by acting in a successful way.

### III

“In 2023, for the first time, over half of junior high school students achieved Grade 3 in the Eiken test, the standard for English proficiency certification in Japan, and a similar proportion of high schoolers obtained Grade Pre-2”, said the Japan Times.<sup>35</sup> I have discussed some problems with Japanese English education and the circumstances of other Asian countries. In 2020, the Japanese government proposed that students start introductory English classes starting from 3rd grade, and from 5th grade, they must take an English class.<sup>36</sup> Japan hosted a major event, the Tokyo Olympics. However, Japan ranks 92nd in English proficiency in the world according to EF.<sup>37</sup> This means even though the government made a new system of teaching English, the percentage of Japanese English skill continues to decline. In this essay to understand, I will suggest some solutions from three different perspectives which are physical, psychological and indirect.

For the physical solution, the most important thing for improvement is speaking skill. According to the PROGRIT Corporation, people who can speak English well tend to spend more time shadowing. The percentage of time spent on shadowing increased from 24% at the A1 level

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<sup>35</sup> Yuko Tamura, “Japan’s English-language education doesn’t pass the test”, the japan times, February 17, 2025

<sup>36</sup> KK Miller, “What’s wrong with English education in Japan? Pull up a chair”, Japan Today, October 7, 2024

<sup>37</sup> EF, “The world’s largest ranking of countries and regions by English skills”, EF, 2024

to 30% at the B2 level.<sup>38</sup> Currently, English education is focusing on memorizing new vocabularies, reading and writing to get a high score for an exam or obtaining qualifications. Also, most Japanese schools do not have enough time to practice speaking during a class. In 2018, Oricon Inc. did a survey about how many Japanese people can speak English, and The results showed that about 53% of respondents said they knew some basic words and phrases. On the other hand, only 14.7% of people can speak English fluently or can make a regular conversation.<sup>39</sup> Consequently, many people can understand a little of what foreigners say, but they are not able to say something in their own words. Through this current situation, By conversing with others in English, people can learn a lot of useful words like slang that people can not get from a textbook, and also people tend to be afraid of making mistakes, especially Japanese people.<sup>40</sup> Therefore, this also helps to strengthen your personality.

It is also important to improve the psychological part for studying a new language. As for learning a new language, the important thing is not to be afraid of making mistakes and not to give up studying.<sup>41</sup> Japanese people tend to avoid making mistakes and hesitate to speak English because they do not have enough confidence.<sup>42</sup> Japanese students in particular often fear speaking English in front of classmates. In contrast, there is evidence that having confidence is an essential thing to speak English. According to Erica Derrickson who is a teacher of eikaiwa (English conversation school), “I showed them that there is usually not just one right answer, but

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<sup>38</sup> Ryokachi, “An in-depth look at the differences between those who improved their English and those who did not. What does the data tell us about the differences in English learning methods?”, Ultra Editorial Office, June 18, 2024

<sup>39</sup> Diana Ploscaru, “How Many People in Japan Speak English?”, History of English, March 16, 2025

<sup>40</sup> Richa, “The Power of Conversation: How Regular English Speaking Practice Can Boost Fluency”, ENGVARTA, February 14, 2024

<sup>41</sup> James (Jim) H, “Lost in Translation: Why Japan’s English Proficiency Struggles Despite Big Spending”, Linked in, November 23, 2024

<sup>42</sup> WIZWORDS, “Why Are Japanese People's English Proficiency Levels So Low? Uncovering Problems in Education and Culture”, Note, July 22, 2024

instead innumerable ways to effectively express oneself in English”.<sup>43</sup> She tried to teach students by thinking “Can this person understand me?”, not “Is it right or not?”. Consequently, their English improved immediately. One student who barely could use only a few words became a frequent speaker. In addition, even if people study more and more, there is only a big relevance to get confidence for English, said JALT which is the Japanese association for language teaching.<sup>44</sup> Therefore, this solution is connected with the first solution too.

Improving English skills in Japan is imperfect only for school education. Realistically, materials in Japanese schools are hard to say good things about. WinBe, which is one of the eikaiwa classrooms in Japan, showed that only 10% of English teachers in Japan have studied abroad.<sup>45</sup> Even if a school has some ALT (Assistant Language Teacher), they are not effectively utilized. On the other hand, there are a lot of ways to learn English outside school. YouTube is one method, especially for the younger generation.<sup>46</sup> A popular virtual YouTuber, Ellen-sensei teaches English such as teaching how to pronounce difficult words. Approximately 78.2 million people in Japan use YouTube in their daily life so it helps to access and watch some movies, and lessons in English. <sup>47</sup> Moreover, “English-only” bars and social meetups can provide some opportunities for adults to practice conversation in daily life. The government tries to improve the system of English education but it is not easy to change immediately. Therefore, combining the traditional way with some modern methods like YouTube and TikTok can help people become more confident English speakers.

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<sup>43</sup> OnTESOL, “Why ESL Students in Japan Struggle to Speak English (And How to Help Them!)”, OnTESOL, April 19, 2023

<sup>44</sup> JALT, “Why do Japanese learners of English lack confidence?”, JALT, March 2013

<sup>45</sup> WinBe, “What are the problems with English education in Japan? Comparison with other countries and ways to overcome the issues!”, WinBe, June 26, 2023

<sup>46</sup> James (Jim) H, “Lost in Translation: Why Japan’s English Proficiency Struggles Despite Big Spending”, Linked in, November 23, 2024

<sup>47</sup> Statista, “Leading countries based on YouTube audience size as of February 2025”, Statista, 2025

In conclusion, I discussed three main solutions of Japanese English education. For instance, adding more speaking practice for English learning, studying in a way that builds self-confidence and using social media as a learning aid. As I mentioned before, to change the system of education right away is difficult. Even though the school developed a new curriculum successfully, the results will only become visible after many years. In my opinion, many experts suggest some solutions for the Japanese school system, but initially people have to increase their motivation to study English. Therefore, I think it is important to recommend a way that fits the current era like a key to improving English proficiency in Japan.

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Comparing The UK and Japan with Focusing on Immigration

I

Gary Younge, an award-winning author, broadcaster, and a professor of sociology at the University of Manchester in England, and who has Barbadian parents<sup>1</sup> said “As migrants we leave home in search of a future, but we lose the past”.<sup>2</sup> As can be observed, migrating is a painful decision for people who do it because of various obstacles.<sup>3</sup> To begin with, immigration means the act of someone coming to live in a different country,<sup>4</sup> and the world, the number of people who migrate to another country is increasing, in 2020, which equates to 3.6 percent of the world population.<sup>5</sup> The one popular choice for migration can be the United Kingdom, which is ranked 5th in the world for the number of immigrants in 2020, and Japan is 24th. The numbers are 9.4 million, 13.79% of the population in the United Kingdom, against 2.8 million, 2.19% of the population in Japan.<sup>6</sup> Therefore, this essay aims to shed light on similarities and differences between the United Kingdom and Japan and look up the reasons for deciding the country to immigrate to find what makes the gap in the number of immigrants between them.

There are some similar aspects to each other such as GDP, landscape, military, and history. Firstly, the GDP of Japan is \$4.07 trillion and situated 4th in the world, the United Kingdom is \$3.59 trillion which is equivalent to 6th, the gap between them is only \$480 billion (as of 4 November 2024), so it is fair to say the GDP is one of the similarities.<sup>7</sup> When it comes to landscape, people are required to go beyond the sea if they enter both countries from the

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<sup>1</sup> Younge Gary “About Gary Younge” Gary Younge, date unknown

<sup>2</sup> The Guardian “Immigration Special, Family” The Guardian, 24 March, 2015

<sup>3</sup> Torney Luran “The UK immigration system needs to stop hurting people” Medium, 23 October, 2020

<sup>4</sup> Cambridge University Press & Assessment, “IMMIGRATION” Cambridge University Press & Assessment, date unknown

<sup>5</sup> IOM, “World Migration Report 2024” International Organisation for Migration, 2024

<sup>6</sup> World Population Review “Immigration by Country 2024” World Population Review, 2024

<sup>7</sup> Forbes “The top 10 largest economies in the world in 2024” Forbes, 4 November, 2024

continent.<sup>8</sup> This makes a similarity to the Navy, which seaside countries tend to get stronger, in fact, they are ranked within the top 10 in the world in 2024.<sup>9</sup> Moreover, both countries had long-lasting monarchies. Also, both societies have their languages, which are definitely influenced by the nearby countries. Japanese includes Chinese aspects, and English has some roots in French.<sup>10</sup>

In contrast, they also have dissimilarities including language, religion, and racial diversity. Looking at their languages, the countries whose people speak English as their first language are ubiquitous, for example, the United States, Australia, and South Africa, literally all over the world.<sup>11</sup> The number of English speakers is 1,456 million, and this is equivalent to approximately 12 times more than the number of Japanese speakers.<sup>12</sup> In addition, religions differ perfectly from each other. In each country's long history, religions have changed differently. In the United Kingdom, half of the population is Christian, and after that is the order of no religion, Muslim, Hindu, and others.<sup>13</sup> On the other hand, in Japan, 48.6 % of Japanese adhere to Shintoism, and Buddhism has mostly the same percentage. There are a mere 1.1 % of people who believe in Christianity.<sup>14</sup> Additionally, in terms of racial diversity in 2023, the United Kingdom is a higher diverse country than Japan due to its 39.9 % racial diversity rate; even if it does not look so much as it places 82nd in the world. However, the Japanese racial diversity level is quite low, Japan has only 1.9 % of it, which is one of the least diverse countries in the world.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Google “Google Maps” Google 2024

<sup>9</sup> WDMMW “Global Naval Powers Ranking (2024)” World Directory of Modern Military Warships, 2024

<sup>10</sup> Totman Conrad “The British Isles and Japanese Archipelago: A Comparison of Environmental Basics” Japan Society, 2024

<sup>11</sup> Lingoda “What are the main English speaking countries?” Lingoda, 2024

<sup>12</sup> Berlitz “The most spoken languages in the world in 2024” Berlitz, 26 July, 2024

<sup>13</sup> Joyce Patrick, Spencer M Ulric “Religion of the United Kingdom” Britannica, 8 November, 2024

<sup>14</sup> O’Neil Aaron, “Religious affiliation in Japan 2021” Statista, 30 August, 2024

<sup>15</sup> Wisevoter, “Most Racially Diverse Countries” Wisevoter, 2023

Immigrants absolutely choose countries to migrate to based on several factors, which means they do not have a choice where to live randomly, however, there is no correct way to make a decision on which countries to move to. For instance, some immigrants are concerned about the cost and quality of living, safety, education, and economic stability of the country, while others might consider work opportunities, the country's condition to migrate, or the satisfaction of the citizens.<sup>16</sup> The passport legacy, the globally trusted residence, and citizenship by investment firms recognised for delivering bespoke, high-value immigration investment solutions, said the top three easiest countries to migrate to are 1st Canada, 2nd Australia, and 3rd Germany as in 2024.<sup>17</sup>

To conclude, similarities and differences exist between the United Kingdom and Japan. Also, they are sometimes linked to the reasons for a decision to immigrate to the country. In fact, there are multiple similarities between them but the number of immigrants is different. Above all, I think the difference in language is a strong cause of what makes immigrants come to the United Kingdom, so when it focuses on the passport legacy's statement, a couple of countries in the top three are using English as their first language.<sup>18</sup> If the country that immigrants move to is the country that has English as their first language, they can immigrate there to study English because English is useful and good for education. Moreover, the GDP is parallel to each other, so the immigrants may not think about that if they are confused about which country to move to, the United Kingdom or Japan. Therefore, I learned that language has a big impact on the dissimilarity in the number of immigrants.

## II

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<sup>16</sup> Kalmuk Alevtina, "How to choose the best country for immigration" Immigrant Invest, 14 August, 2024

<sup>17</sup> Passport Legacy, "The 10 Easiest Countries To Immigrate As An Expat In 2024" Passport Legacy, 22 March 2024

<sup>18</sup> Lingoda "What are the main English speaking countries?"

The earth keeps moving 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Similarly, humans are constantly moving around the world. The way of life to move to different countries from the country the people were born in and settle there is becoming a more common decision. In 2020, the number of people who migrated to another country was 281 million, equating to more than 3 out of 100 people being immigrants.<sup>19</sup> Immigration can work because some countries accept migration from other religions. For example, the United States, Germany, Saudi Arabia, and the United Kingdom are popular countries to decide on as the countries immigrants move to. On the date of the migration, some high GDP rate countries such as Japan and China were not in the top 10 countries.<sup>20</sup> In the GDP ranking, Japan is in 4th place and 2nd place in China. The United States, Germany, and the United Kingdom are also standing in the high place and those countries accept a large number of immigrants.<sup>21</sup> The one possible reason for the gap in the number of immigrants is that there are advantages and disadvantages to accepting immigration. To prove it, the UK government stated “ended free movement and taken back control of our borders” in the document that explains the benefits of Brexit,<sup>22</sup> Brexit refers to the decision of the United Kingdom to leave the European Union.<sup>23</sup> That means the United Kingdom had a problem with the free movement of immigrants from other EU countries.<sup>24</sup> Therefore, the main argument presented in this essay is to consider what benefits and drawbacks lie in accepting immigrants to perceive why the gap in the number of immigrants exists.

One significant advantage of accepting immigration is that immigrants fuel the economy. When they become the labour force they increase the economy’s productive capacity and raise the GDP, as a result, although their incomes rise as well, natives can also benefit from it. The

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<sup>19</sup> IOM UK Migration, “World Migration Report 2024” International Organization for Migration, 2024

<sup>20</sup> MPI, “Top 25 Destinations of International Migrants” Migration Policy Institute, 2020

<sup>21</sup> Forbes India, “The top 10 largest economies in the world in 2025” Forbes India, 10 January, 2025

<sup>22</sup> HM Government, “The Benefits of Brexit” HM Government, January 2022

<sup>23</sup> Government of the Netherlands, “What is Brexit?” Government of the Netherlands, date unknown

<sup>24</sup> HM Government, “The Benefits of Brexit”

phenomenon is called “immigration surplus,” and it shares additional GDP accrues to natives.<sup>25</sup> In an essay by Pia Orrenius, vice president and senior economist of the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas, he stated, “If we assume that an additional immigrant does not increase spending on public goods, which is a reasonable assumption, a new immigrant represents a positive fiscal contribution with a net present value of \$259,000.” It is fair to say that the benefit from immigrants is enormous.<sup>26</sup> Immigrants are classified into two types, one is high-skilled and the other is low-skilled, and both migrations can bring advantages in different ways. High-skilled migrants have diverse talent expertise, while low-skilled immigrants can fill job vacancies in unpopular occupations. For example, low-skilled immigrants provide housekeeping and childcare services, and it allows female natives to return to their work or be able to work longer.<sup>27</sup> Silicon Valley has a GDP of \$840 billion in the United States and if this region were a country, it would be the 18th largest country in the world.<sup>28</sup> Such a large-scale region has more than 45 percent of immigrants in Silicon Valley’s total labour force.<sup>29</sup> It can be reasonably argued that immigrants have significantly contributed to Silicon Valley’s economic success. As evidence of that, Sergey Brin, one of the co-founders of Google, was born in Russia and he moved to the United States when he was 6 years old as an immigrant.<sup>30</sup> Google has become one of the world’s largest tech companies, and it plays a key role in supporting the economy of Silicon Valley.<sup>31</sup>

On the other hand, it is important to acknowledge that accepting immigration also has disadvantages. According to Migration Watch UK, an independent and non-political think tank

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<sup>25</sup> Orrenius Pia, “Benefits of Immigration Outweigh the Costs” George W. Bush Institute, Spring 2016

<sup>26</sup> Orrenius Pia, “Too Many Immigrants? No, We Need More” George W. Bush Institute, Winter 2018

<sup>27</sup> Jaumotte Florence, Koloskova Ksenia, Saxena Sweta, “Migrants Bring Economic Benefits for Advanced Economies” IMF, 24 October, 2016

<sup>28</sup> Shah Vikas, “The Reality of Silicon Valley” Thought Economics, 19 October, 2023

<sup>29</sup> International Immigration Forum, “Building the Skills of the Immigrant Workforce in Silicon Valley: Learnings from the Boston, Salt Lake City, and Seattle Regions” International Immigration Forum, 20 March, 2017

<sup>30</sup> Forbes, “Sergey Brin” Forbes, 11 January 2025

<sup>31</sup> Forbes, “Google” Forbes, 10 January 2025

whose President is Lord Green of Deddington, a former Ambassador to Saudi Arabia, the current increasing number of immigrants helps to make the present cost of living crisis in the UK worse, by raising the cost of rent and buying houses.<sup>32</sup> The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government of the United Kingdom stated “...the increase in the non-UK born population in England is expected to have led to a 21% increase in house prices, all else being equal.”<sup>33</sup> Indeed, the rapid population increase in the UK has helped the mounting housing crisis in the United Kingdom, and polls show that the public knows it.<sup>34</sup> In the public attitudes towards immigration in Great Britain, 2023, which by The Migration Observatory informs debates on international migration and public policy, 52% of British people think the number of immigrants coming to the UK nowadays should be reduced.<sup>35</sup> In addition, Immigration can put higher pressure on public services such as schools, hospitals, roads, and public transportation. Migration trends are to be populated in particular areas. For example, part of Scotland suffers from population decline, however, most immigrants settle in overcrowded areas ironically such as London, where other immigrants have already settled. Subsequently, local people can feel a deterioration in public services due to the growing population faster than the number of amenities including schools.<sup>36</sup>

To conclude, accepting immigration has different aspects for destination countries. On the one hand, allowing immigrants can provide benefits for the countries. For instance, they can improve the country's technology level, GDP, and talent. Low-skilled immigrants and

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<sup>32</sup> Migration Watch UK, “How Mass, Uncontrolled Immigration Threatens Your Quality Of Life” Migration Watch UK, 5 April, 2022

<sup>33</sup> MHCLG, “Analysis of the determinants of house price changes” Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 13 April 2018

<sup>34</sup> Migration Watch UK, “How Mass, Uncontrolled Immigration Threatens Your Quality Of Life”

<sup>35</sup> Richards Lindsay, Fernández-Reino Mariña, Blinder Scott, “UK Public Opinion toward Immigration: Overall Attitudes and Level of Concern” The Migration Observatory informs debates on international migration and public policy, 28 September, 2023

<sup>36</sup> Pettinger Tejvan, “Pros and cons of Immigration” Economics Help, 14 May, 2022

high-skilled immigrants can fit into the country in different ways, and they all can yield advantages to the destination. On the other hand, migration can be a cause of rising costs of living, specifically, house prices. A part of the factors of overcrowding in the city of the country is caused by immigration, which can affect the collapse of public services of the city namely schools and transportation. From these aspects, I think that vast territories, such as Russia, the United States, and Canada are often more suitable for hosting migration.<sup>37</sup> If the public services are developed, the countries are more suitable. However, there are contradictions, such as China, and the United Kingdom. My thoughts for the reasons based on the merits and demerits are the original population in China is excessive,<sup>38</sup> and in terms of the United Kingdom, this country attempted to accept immigration, but it was not suited to accommodate immigrants due to the overcrowded cities namely London. Therefore the majority of citizens believe the number of immigrants is overwhelming. I learned countries have different ideas and that immigration can bring both benefits and challenges to destination countries.

### III

The World Migration Report (IOM) revealed “World Migration Report 2024” which examined various ranges of data about resettlement. According to this publication, the number of international immigrants has increased in all UN regions. Additionally, as of 2020, migrants accounted for 3.6 % of the global population, highlighting the fact that a significant number of people have left their home countries.<sup>39</sup> There are various aspects of migration, which include its importance and the issues it raises. For instance, immigrants help the host countries to fill their job vacancies and skill gaps, however, accepting migration might cause the resettlement nations

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<sup>37</sup> Worldometer, “Largest Countries in the World (by area)” Worldometer, date unknown

<sup>38</sup> Worldometer, “Countries in the world by population (2025)” Worldometer, 2025

<sup>39</sup> McAuliffe, M. and L.A. Oucho (EDS.), “World Migration Report 2024” International Organization for Migration (IOM), Geneva, 2024

to get sucked into putting pressure on public services by increasing population.<sup>40</sup> In previous theses, I have discussed immigration, comparing Japan with other countries that have a significant number of settlers, especially the United Kingdom. The biggest dissimilarity between Japan and the UK is language. English speakers account for a much larger proportion of the world population than Japanese speakers.<sup>41</sup> Despite this, similarities can be found between Japan and the high-immigration countries notably the GDP rate, Japan ranks fourth in the world, while the UK ranks 6th.<sup>42</sup> I believe Japan can learn from those countries' experiences to find the most effective approach to migrants. Therefore, the following discussion focuses on awareness from their journey with migrants to decide how Japan can cope with immigrants whether by accepting them or by refraining from doing so.

The benefits of immigration are explained by the World Migration Report (IOM), which observed that there are three advantages of international relocation that transform economies and societies around the world, helping to assist economic boost, contribution through remittances, and demographic rejuvenation. In terms of economic boost, resettlement has played a key role in driving economic growth in the host countries.<sup>43</sup> Japan lost its position as the world's third-largest economic country in 2023 to Germany. This is because the Japanese economy has slipped into recession. According to an article about Japan published on 15 February 2024 by The Guardian, Japan is in a recession typically defined as two consecutive quarters of contraction.<sup>44</sup> Immigration can support Japan's economy in developing and mitigating the consequences of the economic slump. Regarding contribution through remittances, this aids

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<sup>40</sup> Embrace NI, "The pros and cons of migration" Embrace NI, date unknown

<sup>41</sup> Sweet, R., Sosebee, S., and V.V. Campbell, "Languages by Countries" Supreme Court of Nevada Administrative Office of the Courts, date unknown

<sup>42</sup> World Bank Group, "Gross domestic product 2023" World Bank Group, 2023

<sup>43</sup> International Organization for Migration (IOM), "The 3 Benefits of International Migration that Transform Economies and Societies around the World" IOM Latin America and the Caribbean, date unknown

<sup>44</sup> McCurry, J., "Japan loses crown as world's third-largest economy after it slips into recession" The Guardian, 15 February, 2024

mostly migration's home country, and concerning demographic rejuvenation, the result of this empowers the host countries, which means Japan can get the contribution.<sup>45</sup> The Japanese population has been decreasing since 2008. Japan is also described as a country with an aging population. One huge ramification of labour shortage has already begun and caused a number of enterprises to close by lacking employees.<sup>46</sup> The arrival of young settlers deals with the problem it presents by filling the vacancies in the labour force, contributing to Japan to stop the aging population and revitalising the society.<sup>47</sup>

On the other hand, accommodating immigration also has detrimental aspects, which include straining public infrastructure due to the increasing population and leading to a confrontation between local people and newcomers.<sup>48</sup> Japan has approximately 144 million people in the country, and the capital of Japan area which is the greater Tokyo metropolitan district has 25% of the population, equating to over 36 million residents.<sup>49</sup> That means Japan has already been facing issues caused by overpopulation and high density in Tokyo. This is evidenced by the overcrowding of public transportation, Tokyo's primary train station which is Shinjuku station is passed through by some 3.53 million people every day, a figure that reaches the population in Yokohama, the city which has the 6th biggest transport hub.<sup>50</sup><sup>51</sup> Migration trends are to be populated in particular areas, the case in the UK proves this as migrants are attracted to live in the south and London where other immigrants have already settled down.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> International Organization for Migration (IOM), "The 3 Benefits of International Migration that Transform Economies and Societies around the World"

<sup>46</sup> Urata Sujiro "Combating depopulation in Japan" East Asia Forum, 05 March, 2024

<sup>47</sup> International Organization for Migration (IOM), "The 3 Benefits of International Migration that Transform Economies and Societies around the World"

<sup>48</sup> Pettinger, T., "Pros and cons of Immigration" Economics Help, 14 May, 2022

<sup>49</sup> World Population Review, "Tokyo Population 2025" World Population Review, 2025

<sup>50</sup> Chowdhury, R., "Density as urban affect: the enchantment of Tokyo's crowds" Urban Geography, 23 November, 2020

<sup>51</sup> Nippon.com, "Shinjuku Station is Enormous! Daily Passengers Equivalent to Population of Yokohama" Nippon.com, 31 August, 2018

<sup>52</sup> Pettinger, T., "Pros and cons of Immigration"

That might cause a growing population in the greater zone of Tokyo and trigger more overcrowding in such societal infrastructure.<sup>53</sup> Furthermore, roughly 99% of native Japanese speakers live in Japan, highlighting that almost all foreign nationals have language barriers.<sup>54</sup> Also, people who live in Japan are probably Japanese because there are only 3.4 million immigrants in the country, which is equivalent to 2.7% of the total population.<sup>55</sup> Following Economics Help.org resources for those looking to understand the UK and global economy, the communities where the rate of migration is quite low tend to dislike newcomers. It can be observed that Japan has low immigration rates and an isolated language, so Japan is not the best option for foreign nationals to settle down from these points.<sup>56</sup>

Japan should consider the following actions to accept more migration: reinforcing educational reform and support for Japanese children and arrivals, making Japan's rural areas more accessible for settlers, and reforming the working environments. In terms of education, Japan needs to provide a changing mindset for normalising diversity. Doing so for new generations is vital to constructing the next chapter of Japan. Meanwhile, it is important for Japan to deliver language support and some similar measures. Secondly, the development of the accessibility of pastoral zones is required to prevent migrants from congregating in urban regions, which assists in maintaining the public infrastructures in Japan that are available for every local person. Specifically, the government ought to set up job opportunities, stores, houses, and general services throughout the towns. In addition, improvement in working conditions connects more welcoming immigrants to the corporations. They can provide language support, and diversity not to let them feel isolated.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Chowdhury, R., "Density as urban affect: the enchantment of Tokyo's crowds"

<sup>54</sup> Wittgenstein, L., "Japanese Language" World Mapper, 2005

<sup>55</sup> Statista Research Department, "Migration in Japan - statistics & facts" Statista, 30 September, 2024

<sup>56</sup> Pettinger, T., "Pros and cons of Immigration"

<sup>57</sup> Pettinger, T., "Pros and cons of Immigration"

To summarise, accepting immigration benefits a large range of effects to the country, and Japan is also able to obtain the developments. However, several risks exist in doing so starting from putting pressure on public assistance. Additionally, Japan is already facing challenges because of its huge population and density in the capital, therefore, an increasing number of settlers should promote the issues. Thus, Japan's government needs to find solutions to that. The key solutions are reforming education, urbanisation in the countryside, and improving occupational environments. They are in order to provide favourable conditions to migrants with shifted mindsets and set up life spaces. The conclusion of this essay is that Japan ought to deliver services for newcomers and foster accepting more of them to gain various benefits.

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## Changes of Distribution Channels

### I

When you travel, how do you make your plans, get your accommodation, and transportation ticket? Some people are booking online because using the internet in the 2000s became popular all around the world.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, businesses for travel agents and travel operators' jobs experience a drastic decline. For this reason, travel agents and travel operators make their own online site, so they spread the travel booking online. Lately people can book with their own smartphones and laptops, but before the internet was available they had to go to shops of travel agents and travel operators. This is called distribution channels which means direct to the customer, through an intermediary company. In this essay, I will list similarities and differences between the past and now distribution channels systems to consider which travel is better.

Firstly, I will explain about the past of distribution channels. The typical steps are transport principals, accommodation providers and other suppliers next is travel operators, travel agents and customers. These systems were characterised by the time-consuming nature of the process due to the many agencies involved. Also limited opening hours meant that visits had to be planned, so customers could not book quickly. However, customers can ask small questions and be explained more deeply by professionals. Also customers can quickly cancel and plan changes.<sup>2</sup> Making plans face to face allowed for customers to feel peace of mind.

Next I will explain the recent years of distribution channels. Recently types of distribution channels are principal, internet and customers. It shows that the principals are closer

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<sup>1</sup> Fernandez-Arias Elisa, "How online booking has changed the travel agent landscape," TravelPerk, 2023

<sup>2</sup> SN Travel, "What are the advantages of booking with a travel agent?," SN Travel, unknown

to the customer than in the past, as travel operators and agents have turned to the internet. The booking plans online started in the 2000s. Booking online has a lot of advantages for customers that customers could reserve anytime because online do not have limited opening hours. Also they do not have to visit shops, so they can more easily book. However, booking online requires an online payment so customers can not choose to use cash.<sup>3</sup> Also it may be difficult for some elderly people because they can not use the internet so online booking is sometimes a problem.<sup>4</sup>

In conclusion, there are big differences between the past and now. This difference came from technological progress. However, both include advantages and disadvantages. Nowadays the organisation of travel companies needs to maintain a balance between online and store introductions. That way, people of all ages can be stress free of booking their own travel themselves.

## II

The level of awareness of ecotourism among the Japanese is 68.6%, which is said to be 17.5% higher than in 2020.<sup>5</sup> Why is it now popular and influence the travel type of ecotourism? This is because Ecotourism has gained significant popularity in recent years as travelers become more conscious of their impact on the environment and seek out sustainable travel options.<sup>6</sup> Ecotourism, a form of sustainable travel that prioritizes environmental conservation and local community well-being, has gained significant attention in recent years. Also, do you know the meaning of ecotourism? Ecotourism is now defined as responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment, sustains the well-being of the local people, and involves interpretation and education.<sup>7</sup> Ecotourism is about uniting conservation, communities, and

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<sup>3</sup> Johnston Sam, "Advantages and Disadvantages of Online Booking Systems," bookinglive, 2021

<sup>4</sup> Age UK, "The Internet and Older People in the UK- Key Statistics," age UK, 2016

<sup>5</sup> suisinhousakukentoukai, "ecotourism suisinhousakukentoukaitegen," kankyousyou, 2011

<sup>6</sup> Bagby Marjorie, "Why Ecotourism is Popular," TOURISTSERECT, 2023

<sup>7</sup> The International Ecotourism Society, "What is Ecotourism?," The International Ecotourism Society, 2019

sustainable travel. There are benefits to the government, however sometimes it is a threat to ecology, for example for benefits are poor communities, interpretation and conservation. Also threats to ecology are humans are also responsible for the transmission of pathogens to nonhuman animals.<sup>8</sup> I will discuss ecotourism assistance for governments and threats for wildlife.

The benefit of ecotourism for the government is that if travelers visit developing countries for ecotourism, these countries could get the chance of donation from travelers. Through guided tours or volunteer programs, visitors can learn more about the environment they are visiting while helping with conservation efforts such as beach cleanups or planting initiatives.<sup>9</sup> The government could expect growth in the economy. Ecotourism stimulates local economies by attracting visitors who spend money on accommodations, restaurants, and locally made products. The increased popularity of ecotourism often draws investments, creating jobs and boosting regional development. By doing so the government protects and to inherit their cultural heritage, traditional and cuisines. This project is to help the local community by increasing local capacity building and employment opportunities. Ecotourism is an effective vehicle for empowering local communities around the world to fight against poverty and to achieve sustainable development.<sup>10</sup> To say nothing of ecotourism helps for conservation. Offering market-linked long-term solutions, ecotourism provides effective economic incentives for conserving and enhancing bio-culture diversity and helps protect the natural and cultural heritage of our beautiful planet. Moreover ecotourism covered interpretation. With an emphasis on enriching personal experiences and environmental awareness through interpretation,

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<sup>8</sup> IAMAT FSIMT, "Ecotourism and health risk," IAMAT FSIMT, 2023

<sup>9</sup> Raquel, "How ecotourism benefits the environment and local communities," Worldpackers, 2023

<sup>10</sup> The International Ecotourism Society, "What is Ecotourism?," The International Ecotourism Society, 2023

ecotourism promotes greater understanding and appreciation for nature, local society, and culture.

On the other hand, ecotourism includes threats to the natural environment and wild animals. In many cases it involved close observation of an interaction with wildlife, such as when tourists swim with marine animals and walk in mountains. "This massive amount of nature-based and ecotourism can be added to the long list of drivers of human-induced rapid environmental change," said Daniel Blumstein, the study's senior author and professor and chair of ecology and evolutionary biology at UCLA.<sup>11</sup> Furthermore people have the risk of pathogens to nonhuman animals, if wild animals infect those infectious disease influences in wildlife and worst case population numbers could be reduced. Travellers also put at risk the destination community members they are visiting. This might involve habitat degradation, the introduction of invasive species, pollution, overcrowding, and even the facilitation of sex trade.<sup>12</sup> Almost all national<sup>13</sup> park agencies worldwide receive up to 84% of funding from ecotourism, ecotourism also generates ecological impacts, however, as shown for over 800 species.

Given the above, ecotourism has benefits for local governments. For instance, making new career choices, protecting and advertising local traditions, the economy is more active and could collect volunteers. For all of those reasons ecotourism is a chance of developing their own government. By contrast ecotourism has threats for wildlife, for example the possibility of passing on infectious diseases carried by humans to wildlife. In this essay I focus on threats to wildlife, however this type of travel is not only threats for wildlife to exemplify if tourism comes to a natural place, there are various issues that remain, such as the maintenance of clean roads and environmental problems caused by CO2 emissions from the transportation of tourists.

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<sup>11</sup> Morgan Kendall, "Ecotourism can put wild animals at risk, scientists say," PHYS ORG, 2015

<sup>12</sup> IAMAT FSIMT, "Ecotourism and health risk," IAMAT FSIMT, 2023

<sup>13</sup> Russo Danilo, "Net Effects of Ecotourism on Threatened Species Survival," National Library of Medicine, 2016

In conclusion, ecotourism includes a lot of advantages and disadvantages so governments have to make a balanced profit for governments and protect the environment. For this reason governments should connect technologies to ecotourism in that case they might protect their culture, tradition and wildlife. As a result, maintaining a balance between economic activity and environmental protection by governments can be seen as the main challenge for successful ecotourism.

### III

Nowadays, some airline companies are working around the world. These companies have SWOT, which means Strength, Weakness, Opportunity and Threat. SWOT is a method to accurately assess the situation of a company, which is then used to formulate management strategies and business plans.<sup>14</sup> This business method is suitable for planning and marketing, these categories help their companies improve their services. In this essay, I will compare Japanese airlines and British airlines, and I will compare the differences between Japanese companies and British companies. In addition, All Nippon Airways(ANA), the largest Japanese airline<sup>15</sup>, is used as a comparator, while British Airways is used as a comparator for the UK.

Firstly, I will focus on the ANA's SWOT analysis. The strengths of the ANA, this airways is one of the most famous airlines in Japan, so ANA has a strong brand image, number of passengers, many freight lines and a position of the ladder in industries of Japanese airlines. Also, ANA has a high quality of services and safety. ANA has been operating safely for a long years and is highly trusted by other airlines and customers, and customer satisfaction with its services is very high. Alternatively, ANA has international airlines, is connected to other countries' airways, and has been expanding its network. ANA is one of the biggest airlines in

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<sup>14</sup> Peterdy Kyle,"SWOT Analysis,"CFI, unknown

<sup>15</sup> World Airline Award,"World's Top 10 Airlines of 2024,"SKYRAX, 2024

Japan, so it has favourable slots at major domestic and international airports, which puts it in an advantageous position in competition with other airlines. It also operates a large number of flights that are used by a lot of customers. Next, the weakness of ANA, they have international airlines, but there are not many flights compared to other big global airlines, so they are making solutions for this problem, and after COVID-19, this problem was a little and a little to solve. Before COVID-19, ANA depended on domestic airlines and their networks to external shocks, for example pandemic and climate. Also, the ANA's services are of high quality, so they send a lot of money for that. They belong to Full Service Carrier (FSC), so the higher labour and services costs of FSC compared to Low Cost Carrier (LCC) airlines result in higher ticket prices compared to tickets on airlines that use LCC. In addition, the opportunities of ANA, Japan is one of the best destinations in the world, so many customers visit Japan. In 2024, Japan had approximately 36.87 million inbound visitors<sup>16</sup>, and ANA increased the number of passengers, especially Asian people. Also, ANA can get new income sources from the middle-distance international industry, for instance, China and Southeast Asia. Many people visit Japan. Also, now a lot of companies are mindful of the environment, so if ANA does make strong branding for sustainable flight, like using sustainable aviation fuel, and they try to make amenities made from sustainable products.<sup>17</sup> Finally, the threats of ANA are LCC, which offers a lower price than FS, Clik, and the company of Peach. Is LCC a company, so they are the biggest competition for ANA and FSC companies. The FSC companies must make a difference between LCC companies otherwise, they may lose many passengers. Also, in opportunities, I said ANA have to mind sustainability; however, when changing the sustainable things, they must spend a lot of money on these changes. In addition, the focus on environmental measures has led to the

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<sup>16</sup> Statista, "Number of international visitor arrivals to Japan from 2005 to 2024," Statista, 2025

<sup>17</sup> ANA, "Sustainability," ANA, 2025

creation of several new regulations, which also cost a lot of money to comply with. Also, airline companies depend on the world situation, for example, driving is still banned over Russia because Russia is at war with Ukraine, so all airways quit flying over Russia, and they change the driving route. For this reason, almost all airlines have to spend more time travelling.

Secondly, I will discuss British Airways' SWOT analysis. The strengths are that British Airways has a strong international brand image, which has helped with high reliability and global recognition. The high reliability and global recognition help to increase passengers and increase income. Also, British Airways was based at Heathrow airport, which is located in London, and 83.9 million passengers use Heathrow airport in a year.<sup>18</sup> This is a big advantage for British Airways, and it is easy to access for Europe, North America and Asia. These locations were major markets around the world, so many people visited these locations. Also, British Airways joined the International Airline Group(IAG)<sup>19</sup> It was a big airline company, so they have a lot of information about flights and they have skills for services. British Airways joined IAG so they can connect networks with other airlines and reduce costs. In addition, British Airways joined oneworld, a global airline alliance consisting of 14 member airlines. It was founded in 1999<sup>20</sup>, so British Airways can exchange the information with 14 member airlines. British Airways has premium services, for instance, first class, business class and lounge. The comfort of long-haul flights is highly rated and very popular with business passengers. Next, the weaknesses of British Airways. They have problems for pilots and cabin crews. In the past, there were many strikes, so a lot of confusion in the business. Also, after covid-19 increased negative reviews for customer service because British Airways was doing flight cancellations, late departures and refundable for these reasons affected customer satisfaction. In addition, British

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<sup>18</sup> Heathrow Media Centre, "Record demand drives Heathrow growth-results for year ended 31 Dec 2024," 2025

<sup>19</sup> IAG, "Connecting people, businesses and countries," 2025

<sup>20</sup> Oneworld, "oneworld Member Airlines," oneworld, unknown

Airways is the same as the ANA, like FSC companies, so they have a problem making a difference for LCC companies. The FSC companies have to spend a lot of money on customer services, labour costs and freight costs, so they have lost price competitiveness to LCC companies. Also, customers have concerns about its failures, as several system downtimes have occurred in the past. The opportunities of British Airways are that they can make a strong long-haul flight from the UK and Europe to North America and Asia-Pacific c<sup>21</sup>. These continents have increased demand recently, so when they increase flights for these areas, they may get new customers. They have a strong point of premium travel, so they have to expand the services of high-quality and high-cost flights, and they may be able to improve their income. Also, they joined IAG so economies of scale increase through common purchasing power, aircraft procurement and operational systems. Finally, the threats to British Airways are competition from LCC companies in Europe, which have a lot of LCC companies, for example, easyjet and Wizz Air, so there is significant competition. Also, recently increase the solutions to protect the environment, so airline industries have rules for the UK and EU Emissions Trading Systems(ETS)<sup>22</sup> and the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)<sup>23</sup>.

In conclusion, in this way, ANA and British Airways have many strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. The strengths are a bit different between both companies. For example, ANA worked in Japan, so they have high reliability from the Japanese, and British Airways is a UK company, so they have reliability from Europeans. Also, the weaknesses of both companies have problems for competition for LCC companies, and their companies depend on the climate. In addition, the opportunities of ANA and British Airways need to be proactive in environmental measures. It may help improve the bland images. The threats of ANA and British Airways are

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<sup>21</sup> British Airways, "Our route network," British Airways, unknown

<sup>22</sup> GOV.UK, "UK Emissions Trading Scheme for aviation: how to comply," [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/uk-emissions-trading-scheme-for-aviation-how-to-comply), 2021

<sup>23</sup> ICA, "Rules of the Air," ICA, 2005

increasing the cost of protecting the rules for the environment, for instance, some governments make new rules for flights, so they have to spend money on these rules. In this way, ANA and British Airways have different SWOT analyses, however, some industries sometimes resemble topics like weaknesses and threats. They have problems with increased competition for LCC companies. LCC companies were low-priced but not of high-quality customer service. These companies' tickets were cheap, so some people chose these airlines' tickets. FSC companies have to improve their customer service and other services.

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## The Shifting Of The Function Of Japanese Emperor Defined By The Constitution

### I

Nowadays, Japan is having a lot of problems. If I give examples, it is endless, the declining birth rate and ageing population, foreign policy with China and Russia can be examples. However, the Imperial succession must be solved as expeditiously as practicable. This is because the Japanese Emperor has significant important parts of Japanese politics. According to Imperial House Law and the constitution of Japan, the Japanese Emperor is acting in many ways such as “Appointment of the Prime Minister as designated by the Diet”. However, it is decided that “The Imperial Throne of Japan is succeeded to by male descendants in the male line of Imperial Lineage (Constitution, Article 2, and Imperial House Law, Articles 1 and 2)”.<sup>1</sup> <sup>2</sup>It is not always true that an Emperor has a son who can inherit the name of Emperor and this is a problem. The reason why is that it is not necessarily someone who can apply for this decision in the imperial family. If this decision is not changed, there may be a crisis of political working. Therefore, I will consider how the Japanese Emperor should be treated through three essays. The first essay will explain the history, especially since the 1800s, and functions of the Japanese Emperor on two constitutions before and after the second war.

First, It is said that the history of the Japanese Emperor dates back to the 7th century BCE.<sup>3</sup> Also, the history of the Japanese Emperor has been continued from a Japanese myth called “Shinto”.<sup>4</sup> It relates to creating a constitution. Moreover, the power was delegated from the Emperor to the government called “*Bakufu*”, and it governed Japan from 1603 to 1867.

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<sup>1</sup> The Imperial Household Agency, “The Emperor”, The Imperial Household, Date unknown,

<sup>2</sup> National Diet Library, “The constitution of Japan”, National Diet Library, Date unknown

<sup>3</sup> Cartwright Mark, “Emperor of Japan”, WORLD HISTORY ENCYCLOPEDIA”, July 10, 2019

<sup>4</sup> The Editors Of Encyclopedia Britannica, “Emperors and Empresses Regnant of Japan”, Britannica, Date unknown

<sup>5</sup>However the governmental power was returned from the government to the Emperor. In 1868, the Emperor published “Charter Oath”. It included: (1) “Deliberative assemblies shall be established on an extensive scale, and all governmental matters shall be determined by public discussion.” (2) “All classes, high and low, shall unite to carry out vigorously the plan of government.” (3) “All classes shall be permitted to fulfill their just aspirations so that there will be no discontent.” (4) “Evil customs of the past shall be discontinued, and new customs shall be based on the just laws of nature.” (5) “Knowledge shall be sought throughout the world in order to promote the welfare of the empire.”<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, it is said that the remote cause of decision of the Constitution of the Empire of Japan came from the unequal treaty. It had two points: 1. Denial of tariff autonomy of Japan, 2. Consular jurisdiction allowed by Japan. It means, the Japanese judiciary could not judge foreign people. Therefore, the government needed to establish a modern constitutional system. Also, to have a constitution was one of the points to be treated as a modern nation. For these reasons, the government started to create the constitution. First, Tomomi Iwakura, who was a member of the government, suggested three principles. The constitution must be a constitution granted by the Emperor, and creation of the constitution must not be hurried this is because the Japanese people did not have much knowledge to prepare to adapt to constitutional politics, and the Japanese government was not going to be a British style of parliamentary government, and was going to introduce the style of Prussia in which ministers were responsible for the Emperor. An imperial edict which ordered opening the diet was published on October 12nd in 1881. Moreover, these days, the interest in politics was getting higher around people. It is called the Freedom and People’s Rights Movement. It required the opening of diet and amendment of the unequal treaty. After the publication of the Imperial edict,

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<sup>5</sup> The Editors Of Encyclopedia Britannica, “Tokugawa period”, Britannica, Date unknown

<sup>6</sup> The Editors Of Encyclopedia Britannica, “Charter Oath”, Britannica, October 28, 2024

an imperial command, which ordered the study of the constitution in Europe, was given to Hirobumi Ito, who was a member of the government. Hence, Ito got the role of leader, and 10 members went to Europe. After they arrived in Berlin, Germany, they met Rudolf von Gneist and Albert Mosse, who were famous legal scholars. Gneist told them the diet should not have a power to influence the finance and military. However, Gneist did not make the lecture about politics and this role was given to Mosse. What Mosse taught was extensive, such as the history of the Prussian constitution, the functions of the king such as the power and privilege, the duty and right of the nation, the electoral system, the power of members of parliament, the relationship between the government and parliament. After that, Ito and other members went to Vienna, Austria to meet Stein, who was one of the most famous jurists. The difference between Stein's lecture and Mosse's lecture was, Mosse's lecture explained about the decided law of Prussia but Stein's lecture included political philosophy. After they learned these things, they went back to Japan and started composing the constitution. Before they started it, the cabinet system was established and Hirobumi became the first prime minister of Japan. This purpose was to advance responsible politics by unifying the way to make decisions. Then, Hirobumi Ito, Miyoji Ito, Kowashi Inoue and Kentaro Kaneko became the main members to create the constitution of the Empire of Japan. On March, 1887, they started writing the draft of the constitution and agreed that the constitution must be granted by the Emperor, the cabinet is the system just to support the Emperor, it meant the person who governs Japan is the Emperor and the sovereignty belongs to the Emperor, and finally, the bicameral system. The basis of these decisions came from the lectures in Germany and Austria. Furthermore, they stood 7 principles including: 1. Publishment of Imperial Act Law and the platform of the Imperial family would be separated, 2. The constitution must have been based on the national policy and the history of

Japan, 3. The contents of the constitution must have been limited to the major items and simple and clear. Also, it should have been easy to interpret with the development of Japanese politics, 4. Parliamentary law, electoral law would be decided by law, so it would not be included in the constitution, 5. The organisation of the House of Peers was decided by imperial edict. However, to change this edict, the consent of the House of Peer is essential, 6. The land of Japan would be defined by not the constitution and by the law, 7. To give members of parliament the right to report to the throne. The third principle was essential to justify the history of the Emperor came from the myth and this position is holy. After that, they formed the draft plan of the constitution formed by 7 chapters and 76 articles which included: 1. The Emperor, 2. The rights and duties of subjects, 3. The imperial diet, 4. The Minister of State and Privy Council, 5. The judicature, 6. Finance, 7, Supplementary Rules. Then, it was presented to the Emperor and sent to the Privy Council to be considered. This Privy Council was the organisation to support the Emperor to decide specific important laws or problems such as the change of the constitution or the law related to the constitution. In the Privy Council, few words were changed. For example, in article 5, “The Emperor exercises the legislative power with the approval of the Imperial Diet.” was changed to “The Emperor exercises the legislative power with the consent of the Imperial Diet.” This is because, in general, the word “approval” was used when the decision was allowed by the person in power. However, the Emperor must have been at the top of the country, so to emphasise that the diet is the organisation to support the Emperor. Then, this constitution was announced in Japan. Next, the election of the House of Representatives was held and the member of the House of Peers was chosen. Also, after this process, the constitution of the Empire of Japan was enforced.<sup>7</sup> Next, the function of the Emperor was defined following this: Article 1.

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<sup>7</sup> *Saiko Hoki Toshite No Kenpo No Arikat Ni Kansuru Chosa Syo Iinkai, “Meiji Kenpo To Nihonkoku Kenpo Ni Kansuru Shiryo”, Saiko Hoki Toshite No Kenpo No Arikat Ni Kansuru Chosa Syo Iinkai, May, 2003.*

The Empire of Japan shall be reigned over and governed by a line of Emperors unbroken for ages eternal, Article 2. The Imperial Throne shall be succeeded by Imperial male descendants, according to the provisions of the Imperial House Law, Article 3. The Emperor is sacred and inviolable, Article 4. The Emperor is the head of the Empire, combining in Himself the rights of sovereignty, and exercising them, according to the provisions of the present Constitution, Article 5. The Emperor exercises the legislative power with the consent of the Imperial Diet, Article 6. The Emperor gives sanction to laws, and orders them to be promulgated and executed, Article 7. The Emperor convokes the Imperial Diet, opens, closes and prorogues it, and dissolves the House of Representatives, Article 8. The Emperor, in consequence of an urgent necessity to maintain public safety or to avert public calamities, issues, when the Imperial Diet is not sitting, Imperial Ordinances in the place of law, (2) Such Imperial Ordinances are to be laid before the Imperial Diet at its next session, and when the Diet does not approve the said Ordinances, the Government shall declare them to be invalid for the future, Article 9. The Emperor issues or causes to be issued, the Ordinances necessary for the carrying out of the laws, or for the maintenance of the public peace and order, and for the promotion of the welfare of the subjects. But no Ordinance shall in any way alter any of the existing laws, Article 10. The Emperor determines the organization of the different branches of the administration, and salaries of all civil and military officers, and appoints and dismisses the same. Exceptions especially provided for in the present Constitution or in other laws, shall be in accordance with the respective provisions (bearing thereon), Article 11. The Emperor has the supreme command of the Army and Navy, Article 12. The Emperor determines the organization and peace standing of the Army and Navy, Article 13. The Emperor declares war, makes peace, and concludes treaties, Article 14. The Emperor proclaims the law of siege (2) The conditions and effects of the law of siege

shall be determined by law, Article 15. The Emperor confers titles of nobility, rank, orders and other marks of honor, Article 16. The Emperor orders amnesty, pardon, commutation of punishments and rehabilitation, Article 17. A Regency shall be instituted in conformity with the provisions of the Imperial House Law, (2) The Regent shall exercise the powers appertaining to the Emperor in His name.<sup>8</sup> These words meant the sovereignty belonged to the Emperor. Also, Japanese politics had been run as a central focus on the Emperor until the end of the second world war.

On the other hand, the Japanese constitution and the definition of the Emperor has been changed significantly after the second world war. On August 14th, 1945, the Japanese government accepted the Potsdam declaration issued by the United Nation on July 26th, 1945.<sup>9</sup> After that, The General HeadQuarter (GHQ) was established. Also, this organisation had been run under the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers and had led to Japanese policy and economy.<sup>10</sup> <sup>11</sup>The constitution of the Empire of Japan started to be changed. In the Potsdam Declaration, it was argued that “the Japanese Government shall remove all obstacles to the revival and strengthening of democratic tendencies among the Japanese people. Freedom of speech, religion, and of thought, as well as respect for the fundamental human rights shall be established”.<sup>12</sup> GHQ thought that this wording meant the sovereignty should have been had by the nation of Japan. On the other hand, the Japanese government disagreed with the GHQ holding that popular support was not a priority rather expressing assistance for the Emperor,

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<sup>8</sup> National Diet Library, “The Constitution of the Empire of Japan”, National Diet Library, Date unknown

<sup>9</sup> House of Representatives Constitution Research Council secretariat, “*Nihonkoku Kenpo No Seitei Ni Kansuru Shiryou*”, House of Representatives Constitution Research Council secretariat, November, 2016

<sup>10</sup> National Diet Library, “*Rengokokugun Saiko Shireikan Soshireibu (GHQ/SCAP) Soshikizu*” National Diet Library, Date unknown

<sup>11</sup> OFFICE OF THE HISTORIAN, “Occupation and Reconstruction of Japan, 1945–52”, OFFICE OF THE HISTORIAN, Date unknown

<sup>12</sup> National Diet Library, “Potsdam Declaration”, National Diet Library, Date unknown

arguing that they could change their interpretation for the constitution.<sup>13</sup> Therefore, the Japanese government decided on four principles called Joji Matsumoto's "Four-Point Principle for Constitutional Reform" about the new constitution : 1. Maintaining the sovereignty of the Emperor, 2. Expanding the powers of the Diet, 3. Expanding the responsibilities of Ministers of State to the Diet, 4. Strengthening protections of the people's rights and liberties. It was submitted to GHQ on February 8th. GHQ was surprised by this conservative plan. After that, the Supreme Commander of Allied Powers, Douglas MacArthur ordered new three principles. This is because he thought that this tentative plan was not suitable to achieve democratisation of Japan.<sup>14</sup> This included: 1. the Emperor is at the head of the state. His succession is dynastic. His duties and powers will be exercised in accordance with the Constitution and responsive to the basic will of the people as provided therein, 2. War as a sovereign right of the nation is abolished. Japan renounces it as an instrumentality for settling its disputes and even for preserving its own security. It relies upon the higher ideals which are now stirring the world for its defense and its protection. No Japanese Army, Navy, or Air Force will ever be authorized and no rights of belligerency will ever be conferred upon any Japanese force, 3. The feudal system of Japan will cease. No rights of peerage except those of the Imperial family will extend beyond the lives of those now existent. No patent of nobility will from this time forth embody within itself any National or Civic power of government. Pattern budget after British system<sup>15</sup>. After this order, deliberation about the new constitution was started in the House of Representatives of Japan with a focus on this order. Through this deliberation, some details were decided. Then, they were

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<sup>13</sup> House of Representatives Constitution Research Council secretariat, "*Nihonkoku Kenpo No Seitei Ni Kansuru Shiryou*", House of Representatives Constitution Research Council secretariat, November, 2016

<sup>14</sup> National Diet Library, "*Joji Matsumoto's Four-Point Principle for Constitutional Reform, December 8, 1945*", National Diet Library, Date unknown.

<sup>15</sup> National Diet Library, "*MacArthur Notes (MacArthur's Three Basic Points), February 3, 1946*", National Diet Library, Date unknown

approved by the House of Representatives and the House of Peers.<sup>16</sup> According to the Japanese constitution, the Japanese Emperor is defined as these in chapter 1 through 7 articles. In article 1, the Japanese Emperor is defined as: “The Emperor shall be the symbol of the State and of the unity of the people, deriving his position from the will of the people with whom resides sovereign power”.<sup>17</sup> It is the result of shifting of sovereignty from the Emperor to the Japanese nation.<sup>18</sup> In article 2, it argues that the succession of the Emperor. It is decided: “The Imperial Throne shall be dynastic and succeeded to in accordance with the Imperial House Law passed by the Diet.” Article 3, “The advice and approval of the Cabinet shall be required for all acts of the Emperor in matters of state, and the Cabinet shall be responsible therefore.” Article 4, “The Emperor shall perform only such acts in matters of state as are provided for in this Constitution and he shall not have powers related to government. (2) The Emperor may delegate the performance of his acts in matters of state as may be provided by law.” Article 5, “When, in accordance with the Imperial House Law, a Regency is established, the Regent shall perform his acts in When, in accordance with the Imperial House Law, a Regency is established, the Regent shall perform his acts in matters of state in the Emperor's name. In this case, paragraph one of the preceding article will be applicable.matters of state in the Emperor's name. In this case, paragraph one of the preceding article will be applicable.” Article 6, “The Emperor shall appoint the Prime Minister as designated by the Diet. (2) The Emperor shall appoint the Chief Judge of the Supreme Court as designated by the Cabinet.” Article7 “ The Emperor, with the advice and approval of the Cabinet, shall perform the following acts in matters of state on behalf of the people: 1. Promulgation of amendments of the constitution, laws, cabinet orders and treaties, 2.

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<sup>16</sup> House of Representatives Constitution Research Council secretariat, “*Nihonkoku Kenpo No Seitei Ni Kansuru Shiryou*”, House of Representatives Constitution Research Council secretariat, November, 2016

<sup>17</sup> National Diet Library, “The constitution of Japan”, National Diet Library, Date unknown

<sup>18</sup> House of Representatives Constitution Research Council secretariat, “*Nihonkoku Kenpo No Seitei Ni Kansuru Shiryou*”, House of Representatives Constitution Research Council secretariat, November, 2016

Convocation of the Diet, 3. Dissolution of the House of Representatives, 4. Proclamation of general election of members of the Diet, 5. Attestation of the appointment and dismissal of Ministers of State and other officials as provided for by law, and of full powers and credentials of Ambassadors and Ministers, 6. Attestation of general and special amnesty, commutation of punishment, reprieve, and restoration of rights, 7. Awarding of honors, 8. Attestation of instruments of ratification and other diplomatic documents as provided for by law, 9. Receiving foreign ambassadors and ministers, 10. Performance of ceremonial functions. Article 8. No property can be given to, or received by, the Imperial House, nor can any gifts be made therefrom, without the authorization of the Diet.<sup>19</sup> These definitions mean the Emperor is essential for Japanese politics to be run. It is especially important to run the Japanese Diet.

In conclusion, the biggest change in the way the Japanese monarchy in the constitution is shifting sovereignty from the Emperor to the nation. However, there is a common point. That is, Japanese politics cannot stand without monarchy. It may be considered to demolish the monarchy. However, this system has been used since the Meiji era. Hence, it will create confusion. Furthermore, what is most important is that the Imperial family can be an emotional support for the Japanese. For example, on the first day of this year, the earthquake happened in Ishikawa, Japan. The emperor and the Empress visited there and gave warm words to disaster victims. It must have been a strong support for these disaster victims and they got motivation to stay positive. Therefore, Japanese monarchy is essential not only as usual but also when the part of or whole of Japan faces an emergency situation. Hence, this position must be saved forever. However, it is decided that the name of the Emperor is only the boy in the male line. It has a problem that it is not always the Emperor who has a son. It means there is potential that the

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<sup>19</sup> National Diet Library, "The constitution of Japan", National Diet Library, Date unknown

Japanese monarchy disappears. To consider this problem, in the next essay, I will argue about the British monarchy.

## II

The history of the British Monarchy is one of the longest in the world. In history, there were 64 Monarchs starting from Egbert who became the first King in the Britain island<sup>20</sup>. In the history of around 1200 years, there were many changes to approach the current shape. In this essay, I will explain the points that have affected the British Monarchy and roles of the King. Also, I will not explain all the Kings who existed in history on this island.

To begin with it must be explained about the composition of the British constitution to know the role of the Monarchy. As it is commonly known, the British constitution is not codified in the same document and it is formed with several parts including acts of the Parliament, Conventions, Common law, and Authoritative Works. First, some Acts of the Parliament are part of the British constitution. They have several important decisions to run the state such as the devolution settlements, the right of vote and the holding of election, the upholding of human rights, the prohibition of discrimination, the existence of the Supreme court. However, there is no means to define the difference between these importance and political decisions. Next, the Conventions means that common understanding about the running of the Constitution. It is often hard for them to be defined and it can be interpreted widely. Also, they do not have legal binding powers. For instance, it is thought that the Prime minister should be a member of the House of Commons. Traditionally, they tended not to be written as official documents, while recently, explanations of these conventions have been more likely to be written down as an official interpretation. Furthermore, the UK has a system known as ‘Common law’. It means

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<sup>20</sup> Johnson Ben, “Kings and Queens of England & Britain”, HISTORIC UK, date unknown,

judges are able to declare that the law is based on custom and precedent.<sup>21</sup> It is said that the history of Common law started from 1066.<sup>22</sup> Then, there are some publications which have affected the British constitution. The British constitution is separated with a considerable number of parts, so it is essential to have professional opinions. For instance, around the 19th and early 20 century legal scholar Albert Venn Dicey showed an interpretation called 'Parliamentary Sovereignty'.<sup>23</sup> This means that the Parliament is the supreme authority which can create or end any law.<sup>24</sup> These are the pieces which form the British constitution.

However, to form the British constitution, there are some evaluations. First, Magna Carta has affected the shape of British Monarchy and politics. Magna Carta is also known as the Great Charter.<sup>25</sup> In 1199, John was crowned as successor of Richard I. Before he became the King, England had had many problems. His father Richard I spent a lot of money on fighting against France and the Crusades. Furthermore, when he went back to England, he was captured by the Holy Roman Empire, and his country was required ransom to get him back. It affected the finance of England significantly. Furthermore, after he got crowned, there were two main problems. First, King John got tension with the church. The new Archbishop of Canterbury by King John was ignored by the Pope, who was head of the Catholic church. Also, the Pope pointed out the new Archbishop of Canterbury, whose name was Stephen Landon, and he tried to send him to England, but it was refused by King John. In the end, King John accepted a new Archbishop of Canterbury appointed by the Pope to enter England, but it became a reason why Stephen Landon cooperated with some barons. Next, after John became a king of England, he

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<sup>21</sup> THE CONSTITUTION SOCIETY, "The Uk constitution", date unknown

<sup>22</sup> The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica Article, "Common law", November 24th, 2024

<sup>23</sup> THE CONSTITUTION SOCIETY, "The Uk constitution", date unknown

<sup>24</sup> UK Parliament, "Parliamentary Sovereignty", UK Parliament, date unknown

<sup>25</sup> THE CONSTITUTION SOCIETY, "The Uk constitution", date unknown

started losing land in France. He lost land little by little and in 1204, he lost Normandy. Therefore, he created heavy taxes on the nobility. In spite, he could not win Normandy back, and he got many criticisms and was nicknamed as 'soft word.' In May, 1215, a group of barons formed an army in the north of England and traveled toward London, where King is in. John had no choice other than making agreement with them about changes to govern the country. After all, they made an agreement that the power of the King must be limited and the King had to cooperate with barons more. This agreement was named Magna Carta, which means 'Great Charter' in Latin. Some points were: Someone accused of a crime could not be imprisoned or punished without having a fair trial first; the king could not raise new taxes unless he had the agreement of the barons; a council of 25 barons was set up to ensure the king followed the rules the charter put in place.<sup>26</sup> . Second, it must be explained how the Convention 'the Monarchy reigns, but does not rule' and the cabinet system had been developed. To begin with, the cabinet system developed from the Privy council in the 17th and early 18th centuries, and then it got larger and it became not able to debate effectively. Therefore, it was decided that the Monarchs would talk with members of the Privy council before these members make decisions in the widely full Privy council. Hence, almost all decisions had already been made, so the power of the Privy council got weaker significantly. After George I became king, he ceased to attend meetings.<sup>27</sup> This is because Queen Ann did not have successor, so George I was invited from Germany<sup>28</sup>, so he spoke little English. As a result, the power in this meeting started being left to the chief known as a prime minister. The process of making decisions through a prime minister and ministers appeared in the era when Sir Rober Walpole was chief minister, and was

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<sup>26</sup> BBC, "King John and the Magna Carta", BBC, date unknown,

<sup>27</sup> The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica Article, "Cabinet", January 14th, 2025

<sup>28</sup> The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica Article, "George I", date unknown,

established by Sir William Pitt in the late 17th century. Also, the Reform act in 1832 has shown two main principles; the government should be formed by the party which has majority in the parliament. Also, ministers have to be responsive to the House of Commons.<sup>29</sup> These whole principles are the basis of current British politics and Monarchy.

Finally, the King has several roles in the UK and other countries. First, as it is known, the King reigns, but does not rule. The role of ruling is left to his government. The King is constitutionally obligated to follow the government's advice. His main roles as a head of state are to open a new session of parliament, to appoint a prime minister and other ministers, and to give royal assent to bills passed by the parliament, signifying that they have become law. Moreover, King chairs monthly meetings of the Privy Council, to approve the Orders in Council; he approves incoming and outgoing of the new ambassadors and appoints other important parts such as senior judges. However, these are done through advice of the government and he sees a prime minister weekly. Furthermore, Monarchs have significant parts not only politically but also for the people in the UK and other countries. The representative roles of the British Monarchs are acting as a centre of identity of the nation, unity and pride; gives stability and continuity. Also, they contribute to the support for the voluntary services. These main roles are achieved through some activities including broadcasting on Christmas day and visiting armed forces, schools, hospitals, chapels and public and voluntary services<sup>30</sup>. Lastly, the King is also the head of the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth is an association of the countries formed by 54 countries.<sup>31</sup>

In conclusion, the history of the British Monarchy has had a long history and several changes. Before the formation of Magna Carta, the King could do everything whatever he

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<sup>29</sup> The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica Article, "Cabinet", January 14th, 2025

<sup>30</sup>The constitution unit, "What is the role of the monarchy?", date unknown,

<sup>31</sup>The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica Article, "Commonwealth", December 24, 2024

wanted to. However, it has been changed under the ruling of King John. This was a first rule to limit and control the power of the King. Afterwards, the power of the King has been left to a prime minister, ministers and the Parliament. Then, the role of the King is watching over the state and nations rather than using power in politics. Recently, there are some voices which argue that they should demolish the Monarchy in the UK, but it is also true that there are many people who love the King and his family. Thus, the UK will take over problems with its democracy and the Monarchs.

### III

Through two essays, I explained about the roles of the Emperor and the King. In this essay, I will compare and contrast the features of the Emperor and the King to define whether these functions are important for countries and find what kind of problems exist.

First of all, there are several common roles in each country. First, they have to authenticate bills. It is essential for keeping the smooth functioning of politics. Also, they cannot reject bills which were passed in each house in the British parliament and the Japanese diet. The process of passing bills is almost the same in both countries. In the UK, bills are submitted to the House of Commons or the House of Lords, after that, there are several disputes, then it will be sent to the House of Commons or the House of Lords. Then, it will be discussed again by the House and if it makes an agreement, it will be passed and sent to the King. After the signature of the King, the bill is going to be a law.<sup>32</sup> In Japan, bills are submitted to the House of Representatives or the House of the House of Councillors, then, they will be considered whether they can be an effective law. When it is passed in the House, it is sent to the other House. After that, they get signed by the Emperor.<sup>33</sup> Furthermore, it is an essential part to create unity in the

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<sup>32</sup> GOV.UK, “Legislative process: taking a bill through Parliament”, GOV.UK, 20 February, 2024

<sup>33</sup> House of Councillors, “Legislative Procedure”, House of Councillors, date unknown

county. First, the British Monarchy has several chances to meet people and a part of the countries such as army and welfare facilities.<sup>34</sup> Also, the Japanese Emperor has the same role. According to the Japanese Constitution, The Emperor shall be the symbol of the State and of the unity of the people, deriving his position from the will of the people with whom resides sovereign power.<sup>35</sup>

However, the interpretation of power of the King and the Emperor exists. First, the King is thought to have political power and it is just thought that he should not use it including rejection of bills. This is because, the British Constitution is formed by four parts; authorities' works, Conventions, Acts of the Parliament and Common law and is uncodified.<sup>36</sup> The problem with this is that it is unclear which power will be prioritised. If the abolition of the Monarch is suggested and passed by the parliament, the King may reject it. It is convinced that the Monarch should not have political power, but it is just Conviction and it is not banned. The potential of this to happen is almost none, but an unclear Constitution can confuse politics. On the other hand, the Japanese Emperor is just a symbol of Japan, and he is never going to have political power. It is codified in the Constitution in Chapter1, article4.<sup>37</sup> Therefore, the decision of the Diet is completely prioritised. Hence, this must never be changed. However, there is a problem in the Japanese interpretation for succession of the Emperor. In the UK, it is decided that the first child of a King will succeed to the rank of King. However, in Japan, it is decided that The Imperial Throne of Japan is succeeded to by male descendants in the male line of Imperial Lineage (Constitution, Article 2, and Imperial House Law, Articles 1 and 2).<sup>38</sup> The reason why it is a problem is if the Emperor does not have a son, there is no one who can succeed the rank of the Emperor.

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<sup>34</sup> The constitution unit, "What is the role of the monarchy?", date unknown,

<sup>35</sup> National Diet Library, "The constitution of Japan", National Diet Library, Date unknown

<sup>36</sup> THE CONSTITUTION SOCIETY, "The UK constitution", date unknown

<sup>37</sup> National Diet Library, "The constitution of Japan", National Diet Library, Date unknown

<sup>38</sup> Imperial Household Agency, "The imperial succession", Imperial Household Agency, Date unknown

As a result, in Japanese politics, impediments will be created. Therefore, this problem should be resolved as quickly as possible.

In conclusion, there are several similarities between the Monarchy in the UK and the Emperor in Japan. It can emphasize the importance of the existence of the King and the Emperor. However, in the UK, the codified constitution does not exist, it may create confusion in politics. Moreover, to keep the Emperor as a part of Japanese politics and as a symbol of Japan and Japanese, there must be changes. However, it is related to the identity of Japan, effective and cogent discussion across not only in the Diet but also the whole country.

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## Heavy Concentration of Power in Tokyo and Potential Extinction of Cities

### I

Tokyo has long been Japan's primary center for economic, cultural, and political activities, drawing younger generations from across the nation in search of education and career opportunities. This intense centralization, however, presents significant challenges for Japan's regional cities, which face depopulation and economic decline. This essay will compare Japan's situation with decentralized models in countries like Germany and France, examining possible solutions to revitalize regional areas and achieve balanced national improving.

Japan, like Germany and France, has a blend of urban and rural landscapes, with extensive transportation infrastructure linking these areas to urban centers. In Japan Shinkansen lines and regional rail networks offer rural citizen access to major cities, supporting tourism and economic interaction. Japan has a marked imbalance due to the concentration of economic, educational, and cultural facilities in Tokyo. <sup>1</sup>While Germany and France, where urban economic hubs are more widely spread. As a result, regional Japanese cities often struggle to dispute with Tokyo in attracting young talent,<sup>2</sup> leading to further population decline and economic stop.

In Germany, decentralization is achieved through a distribution of economic centers, with cities like Frankfurt, Hamburg, and Munich serving as headquarters for various industries.

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<sup>1</sup> Japan Institute for Labour Policy and Training. "働き方改革とその影響: 日本における労働条件の変化 *hatarakikata kaikaku to sono eikyō Nippon niokeru rōdō jōken no henka ..*" JILPT Research Report. Published May 2020.

<sup>2</sup> Nippon.com. "*Nippon no jinkō genshō to kōreika saishin de-ta.*" Japan Data. Published October 15, 2023.

Frankfurt is a financial powerhouse<sup>3</sup>, Munich is a center for technology and engineering, and Hamburg is known for its trade and logistics sector. This structure can be an economic vitality across different regions, reducing reliance on the capital, Berlin. Similarly, France's model sees cities like Lyon and Marseille hosting strong local economies in pharmaceuticals, trade, and other industries, which diminishes the need for residents to migrate to Paris. The result is a more stable balance between urban and regional growth, helping France and Germany avoid the challenges Japan faces with too much urban centralization.

The impact of Tokyo's dominance on Japan's rural areas is stark. Numerous regions, especially in Hokkaido, Tohoku, and Shikoku, face population decline, shrinking tax revenue, and a reduction in essential services. For example, public transportation services in these areas have been scaled back due to low ridership, which creates further barriers for residents and hampers local economic activities. Schools, hospitals, and other critical facilities are also being forced to close, leading to a deteriorating quality of life in rural communities. In 2020, Japan's Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications reported that over 60% of municipalities face population decline,<sup>4</sup> and some risk becoming "ghost towns" by mid-century if trends continue<sup>5</sup>. This stands in stark contrast to Germany, where small towns and regional cities are supported by local industry and government initiatives aimed at fostering regional development.

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<sup>3</sup> Prologis Germany. "Frankfurt am Main: Trade and Business Hub in Central Germany and Central Europe." Published 2023.

<sup>4</sup> RIETI (Research Institute of Economy, Trade and Industry). "日本の経済成長と課題に関する特別レポート *Nippon no keizai seichō to kadai nikansuru tokubetsu report*." Published 2021.

<sup>5</sup> *tōyō keizai onrain . shōshi kōreika ga susumu Nippon no mirai tōkei de miru kadai to tenbō* ." Published May 14, 2018.

Moreover, while Japan has attempted to decentralize economic activities through policies like the "Regional Revitalization Initiative" and tax incentives for companies to move their headquarters outside Tokyo, results have been limited. Economic and employment opportunities in Tokyo remain so dominant that relocation policies have not significantly impacted migration trends. In Germany, however, regional economic policies like the "Joint Task for the Improvement of Regional Economic Structures" have been more effective in encouraging companies to establish operations in smaller cities<sup>6</sup>. This policy promotes balanced development by offering federal and state subsidies to businesses that relocate to underdeveloped regions, thereby supporting regional economies and alleviating pressure on larger cities.

In conclusion, Japan's high concentration of power and resources in Tokyo presents unique challenges to regional development, unlike the decentralized models seen in Germany and France. By promoting regional industries, increasing support for infrastructure, and offering stronger incentives for businesses to establish in other cities, Japan could achieve a more balanced and sustainable growth model. Such a shift would enable regional cities to thrive, providing a higher quality of life for residents across the country and lessening Japan's reliance on Tokyo as the primary driver of its economy.

## II

Urban development is often featured in the controversy between concentrated (a model in which resources and activities are concentrated in one location) and decentralized (a model in which resources and activities are distributed across multiple neighborhoods). Each model has its advantages and disadvantages. Based on reliable data and expert analysis, this essay examines

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<sup>6</sup> Germany Trade & Invest (GTAI). *Investment Grants and Incentives in Germany*. Published 2023.

the advantages and disadvantages of each model, using specific examples from Japan, Germany, and France.

### Advantages of Concentration in a Single Location

Concentration increases economic efficiency by concentrating resources, industry, and infrastructure in a single location. Tokyo is a good example of this model. According to the Japanese Government Cabinet Office, Tokyo represents 20.7% of Japan's GDP<sup>7</sup> (Source: Japan Macro Advisors). The concentration of businesses, educational institutions, and government bodies in Tokyo encourages collaboration and innovation. For example, Tokyo is home to Japan's top 10 universities, attracting talented people from all over the country.

The concentration in Tokyo also enhances international competitiveness. Along with New York and London, Tokyo is recognized as one of the world's leading financial centers<sup>8</sup>. This status attracts foreign investment and promotes tourism, making unipolar concentration a powerful economic strategy.

### Challenges of Concentration

Concentration also has its challenges. First, overcrowding has caused prices of expensive apartments to increase sharply. The average monthly rent for a one-bedroom apartment in central Tokyo exceeds 100,000 yen, making housing unaffordable for many people<sup>9</sup>. Moreover, the increased demand for Tokyo's infrastructure has led to traffic jams and serious environmental stress.

Furthermore, heavy concentration of one location has the potential to increase risk of natural disaster with earthquakes occurring on a yearly basis in Japan. The economy and

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<sup>7</sup> Tokyo metropolitan government. “都民経済計算(都内総生産等)令和3年度年報.” 28 March, 2024.

<sup>8</sup> Real Estate Japan.”Japan Real Estate Investment and Financing Seminars.

<sup>9</sup> Global Financial Centres Index. “When would we know our financial system is working?.” Unknown. Accessed November 12, 2024.

administrative functions of Japan as a whole can be severely impacted. Therefore, risk diversification at city level is extremely important.

### Advantages of Decentralization

Decentralization, on the other hand, promotes regional development and reduces dependence on concentration. In Germany, cities such as Frankfurt, Munich, and Hamburg act as economic centers for finance, technology, and transportation, respectively, reducing dependence on Berlin<sup>10</sup>. Similarly, in France, Lyon and Marseille form independent economies with industries such as medicine and trade<sup>11</sup>.

Decentralization efforts are also making progress in Japan. For example, the government's regional development policy encourages companies to expand into regional areas through government subsidies.<sup>12</sup> There are also systems, such as the “Furusato” tax system, under which residents can financially support local regions and receive training in those regions.

### Challenges to Decentralization

Decentralization has its challenges. Infrastructure development varies from region to region, which can significantly increase costs. In Hokkaido and Tohoku, public transportation systems ceased to function due to low demand, and many services were cut<sup>13</sup>. Furthermore, maintaining the same quality of education, healthcare, and public services throughout the country is very difficult and expensive.

Another challenge is the inequality among regions. While some cities are succeeding with decentralization, other regions are stagnant or facing economic stagnation. In many rural

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<sup>10</sup> Germany Trade & Invest. “markets Germany.” Published October 15, 2023

<sup>11</sup> French Ministry of Economy. “Nos actualités.” unknown.

<sup>12</sup> 自治タイムス編集部. “地方創生交付金の種類一覧や活用事例を紹介.” Published March 31, 2023.

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areas of Japan, labor shortages are a serious problem due to an aging population without a steady supply of young people.

### Balancing the Two Models

The best approach is to combine the advantages of concentration and decentralization. Japan's “supercity” concept aims to achieve this balance by introducing smart technology into regional centers. This concept is expected to ease the burden on Tokyo and promote sustainable regional growth<sup>14</sup>.

Another example is Germany's federal system. Local governments develop their own policies to meet the specific needs of their regions, promoting innovation and sustainability. Concentration and decentralized models are not opposites, but rather compliments. Centralization promotes economic efficiency and international competitiveness, while decentralization promotes sustainability and regional equity. We believe that learning from global examples and developing policies that address the needs of our own countries will help us to better solve problems.

### III

Tokyo has long been the symbolic center of Japan, functioning as a political, economic and cultural center. This concentration has historically led to the modernisation of Japan and its influence on the world, however in recent decades its limitations have been revealed. From economic inequality in the local area to disaster risk vulnerability and urban stress, the over-concentration of people and resources in Tokyo faces serious challenges for the Jaona . As a student who studied in the UK, I have been able to see how balanced regional development can have a positive impact on society. In this essay, I argue that a solution to the excessive

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<sup>14</sup> Hokkaido Prefecture Report.”hokkaido sougou keikaku.” Published 2024.

concentration in Tokyo is necessary as well as urgent, and provide possible solutions according to clear evidence and cross-cultural perspectives as studying abroad.

Tokyo's concentration has created economic efficiencies that are often misunderstood. In general, large cities usually benefit from concentration effects, such as developments and increasing productivity growth because of human exchange. By contrast, in the case of Tokyo it seems to exceed the optimization point that can benefit from heavy concentration in Tokyo.

According to data from the Tokyo Metropolitan Government, Tokyo's GDP per person is approximately 7.74 million yen<sup>15</sup>, which is higher than the national average, but not as large as might be expected. In other words, Tokyo is the capital of Japan, but it is not necessarily efficient, indicating that more growth may follow to overcrowding, rather than being in the national advantage.

Another serious consequence of Tokyo's advantage is the increasing inequality within Japan between regions. Despite the fact that Tokyo's population is only about 11% of the national total, Tokyo contributes about 20% of the national GDP<sup>16</sup>. This imbalance reveals how other regions are being left behind economically and economically. Technically, some experts argue that GDP is not a proper way to measure economic scale in the world, because it is highly compatible with currency value. However using the GDP method is valid when comparing economic scale within a contrary. Young people continue to move to Tokyo in looking for work and education, while the countryside suffers from an aging population and declining tax revenues. In the long term, this demographic imbalance undermines Japan's national land wealth and sustainability<sup>17</sup>.

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<sup>15</sup> Tokyo Metropolitan Government. "都民経済計算(都内総生産等)令和3年度年報." Published March 28,

<sup>16</sup> Tokyo Metropolitan Government. "くらしと統計2024 全国から見た東京都." Published March 27,

<sup>17</sup> Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism. "運輸白書 昭和63年版." Published unknown.

The risks will become even more obvious when disaster preparedness and public health are considered. Tokyo's vulnerability to natural disasters such as earthquakes is well known, but recent events such as the COVID-19 pandemic added a new layer of risk. The high population density in areas such as Shibuya and Shinjuku made social distancing and isolating outbreaks extremely difficult. Furthermore, integral systems such as data centers and national infrastructure are also concentrated in Tokyo, making the city exposed to single points of failure in the an emergency<sup>18</sup>.

Solving these problems will not be easy, but it is possible. Several national strategies have already been proposed, such as encouraging companies to relocate their headquarters to regional cities by offering tax incentives and subsidies(補助金)<sup>19</sup>. In addition, the idea of relocating some government functions outside Tokyo has also attracted attention. For example, the part of relocation of the Consumer Affairs Agency to Tokushima Prefecture has already been carried out <sup>20</sup>. Even though this is still the stage of an experiment. It demonstrates that decentralisation is possible and effective in stimulating local economies. Decentralising some departments of the Ministry of the Environment and the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare to other regions would create jobs in rural areas, stimulate local economies and reduce the burden on Tokyo's infrastructure.

A more in-depth solution is to invest in cities that will become 'second capitals'. For example, Osaka and Fukuoka could be officially named as centers of excellence in the administrative and technological part of Japan, and the government would actively invest in them. This is similar to the approach that South Korea has taken in developing the city of

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<sup>18</sup> SBI Financial and Economic Research Institute. "2024年10月10日レポート." Published October 10, 2024.

<sup>19</sup> Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism. "1 東京プロブレムの解決をめざして".

<sup>20</sup> 徳島新聞, “消費者庁徳島移転「来夏までに結論」担当相、県庁オフィス視察”

Sejong<sup>21</sup>. By relocating some of the public offices, IT industry and media organisations to these cities, a strong alternative to Tokyo can be created and social and economic structure. This requires not only tax incentives, but also large-scale public infrastructure investment, such as high-speed railway systems, smart city technology and the expansion of local universities.

The HS2 rail project in the UK and the development of local universities such as the University of Leeds show that government-led investment can distribute opportunities to the regions: HS2 is a high-speed rail network linking London with Manchester, Leeds and Birmingham, which aims to enhance inter-regional transport links and promote economic growth in rural areas. It aims to promote economic growth in the local area<sup>22</sup>. The University of Leeds also performs an important role for its local economy and, as an international research institution, increases education and employment opportunities in the local area<sup>23</sup>.

Educational reform linked to local regeneration is also important. It is hoped that leading universities such as the University of Tokyo and Keio University will open fully-supported campuses in the local area. In the UK, the University of Manchester and the University of Glasgow function as a core of the local economy, not only educating young people but also attracting international talent and serving as regional research centers. Developing this model in Japan will prevent the concentration of young people in urban areas and rebuild identities in the local area.

Furthermore, digitalisation must be strongly linked to rural regeneration. Rather than simply encouraging remote working, government-led 'digital nomad zones' should be

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<sup>21</sup> The Korea Herald. "Sejong City: The Road to Administrative Reform." Published January 17, 2017.

<sup>22</sup> High Speed Two (HS2) Ltd. "HS2: Britain's New High Speed Railway." Published unknown.

<sup>23</sup> University of Leeds. "Impact of the University on the Region." Published unknown

established in rural areas. This includes creating high-speed internet environments, co-working spaces and housing support to attract young entrepreneurs and remote workers. Such zones have already been introduced in Estonia and other Nordic countries. Estonia and other Nordic countries have already introduced such ‘digital nomad zones’, which have successfully attracted migration from urban areas and international remote workers. Estonia, for example, began its ‘e-Residency’ programme in 2014, setting up a mechanism for entrepreneurs from all over the world to establish and operate legal entities in the country<sup>24</sup>. Finland and Sweden have also been working to attract digital human resources to regional cities, with the ‘Arctic Nomad’ project in the Lapland region of Finland, which combines high-speed internet and a natural environment, attracting particular attention<sup>25</sup> creating a new digital migration trend. Japan's regions have their own charms, such as beautiful nature, safety and unique culture. If these are communicated to the rest of the world, they can attract foreign residents, thus helping to counter the decline in the population.

Finally, cultural and media decentralisation is also essential to correcting the concentration in Tokyo. Currently, much of television, publishing and advertising are concentrated in Tokyo, creating an image of “success = Tokyo”. The Government should establish a subsidy system to support local media production and introduce content originating from the region widely through national broadcasters such as NHK. The UK is the active promotion of regional accents, talent and stories, such as BBC Scotland and ITV Wales. A similar strategy in Japan would increase regional pride and change the value system that says you have to go to Tokyo to be successful.

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<sup>24</sup> Republic of Estonia e-Residency. "e-Residency of Estonia: Apply & Start an EU Company Online." Published unknown.

<sup>25</sup> Finland. "Work in Lapland Campaign Targets Digital Nomads." Published 2021

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## The difference of learning English between Japan and Europe

### I

In recent years, many people have been learning languages around the world. English is the most popular language and English is learned by many people. English has the highest number of second language speakers, with nearly a billion non-native speakers in the world.<sup>1</sup> To speak English in the work place, people can get more money. English has become a good way to have a conversation in many countries and work places, so many people are learning English and speaking fluently. However, in Japan, 20 percent of Japanese people can speak English fluently. In the English Proficiency Index ranks in 2023, Japan was ranked 87th out of 113 countries.<sup>2</sup> Looking at Europe, English is spoken by 47 percent of Europeans as a second language. In addition, 7 out of 10 young Europeans can speak English. Thus, Japan has a contrasting low number when comparing with other highly developed countries, especially those in the European Union.<sup>3</sup> In this essay, I will write about the difference in learning English between Japan and Europe.

In Europe, many people think everyone should be able to speak at least one language other than their mother language. Moreover, this number reached about 86 percent.<sup>4</sup> 76 percent of Europeans think that improving language skills is the most important thing. In this way, many Europeans have a good image and interest in speaking foreign languages. The Netherlands is the number one country on the 2023 EF English Proficiency Index. In the Netherlands, many people do not use subtitles or native language dubs to watch English TV shows and movies. They were

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<sup>1</sup> University of the people, "The 12 Most Important Languages To Learn For Success In 2024," uopeople, 2024

<sup>2</sup> Diana Ploscaru, "How Many People in Japan Speak English?," History of English, 2024

<sup>3</sup> European Union, "Europeans and their languages," European Union, 2024

<sup>4</sup> European Union, "Europeans and their languages," European Union, 2024

surrounded by English from an early age.<sup>5</sup> To my surprise, in Belgium, they start studying language at 3 years old. In Europe, many people start learning non-native languages very early. Japanese people also have a good image to learn English. Many Japanese people start learning English when they enter elementary school. A lot of Japanese people study English for 12 years from elementary school to university. Despite this, Japanese people have problems speaking in English. The difference between Japan and European countries is related. In the Japanese English learning system, reading and writing are most important.<sup>6</sup> This system is for the purpose of passing the exam, so most students can not get listening and speaking skills. In this system, they can not use English fluently. On the other hand, the European English learning system focuses on communication skills. They learn English to use discussion in groups and presentations. They also learn grammar, but it is not the same with Japan. Students learn grammar while speaking. They improve their grammar mistakes in conversation. Many Europeans use English in their school a lot of times. In the Japanese system, students do not have many opportunities to use English in their classes. This difference in learning English makes it difficult to speak English and is the biggest problem for Japanese students. Moreover, many Japanese students are afraid of making mistakes in class. To learn English, making mistakes in speaking is a good way to improve English skills. The Japanese English education system does not have the chance to use their learning in the class. There is not enough time to practice. As a result, it is hard to remember what they learned. From this education, many students think learning English is difficult, and they do not want to learn English. These differences make the difference in English language skill development between European countries and Japan.

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<sup>5</sup> Alexandra Huetter, "Why are the Dutch so good at speaking English?," DUTCHREVIEW, 2023

<sup>6</sup> Tsunagu local, "6 Reasons Why Japanese Cannot Speak English According to a Japanese Local," tsunaguLocal, 2020

In conclusion, there are differences in learning English systems between European countries and Japan. European countries and Japan have the same opinion about learning a language other than the mother language, so in these countries people learn a foreign language from an early age. However, there is a difference in the education system between European countries and Japan, so speaking English is difficult for Japanese students. Because of this problem, many Japanese people do not like to learn English. In this cycle, Japanese people can not speak English. Japan needs to change its education system to finish this cycle.

## II

Now in the world, many people learn English as a second language. English is a good way to communicate with other countries people in their job or daily life, so many people start studying English from 8 or 9 years old<sup>7</sup>. In Japan, many people also learn English the same as in other countries. Many Japanese people start learning English when they are in primary school. In many cases, Japanese people study English from 3rd grade to the end of high school. Many Japanese people spend a lot of time on English classes. In 2020, 35 hours for 3rd and 4th grade students, and 70 hours for 5th and 6th grade students in one year.<sup>8</sup> However, the percentage of English speakers in Japan is less than 20 to 30 percent. English Proficiency Index ranks in 2023, Japan is 87th out of 113 countries.<sup>9</sup> To compare with other highly developed countries, this country is ranked low. In addition, the percentage of people who can speak English fluently is also low. This result comes from some problems of studying English for Japanese people. In this essay, I will discuss the problems of Japanese English education and solutions.

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<sup>7</sup> Deborah Pugh, "Do Japanese people study English in school?," NCESC, 2024

<sup>8</sup> Nathan Crocker, "How English is Taught in Japanese Schools," writeteachjapan, 2023

<sup>9</sup> Diana Ploscaru, "How Many People in Japan Speak English?," History of English, 2024

Now in Japan, many people want to learn English. 50 percent of Japanese people aged 10 to 50 want to learn English.<sup>10</sup> Moreover, Japan is one of the countries that advanced with education in the world. Looking at the PISA scores in 2022, Japan got high scores in all subjects, math, science, and reading.<sup>11</sup> In contrast, Japanese people are weak in English. This way is the problem of Japanese English Education systems. One of the problems is the means of English class. In many Japanese schools, students study English for their examinations. They learn English for only examinations, not to speak with other people. Thus, students often use class time for grammar and reading. Students sometimes have conversations, debates and presentations in English, but it is rare. In this education system, there is no importance for conversations and practical speaking skills. They do not have enough opportunities to improve their speaking ability and communication skills. Also, this way causes the lack of listening skills. Students can not listen to what other people are saying and are afraid to answer the answer. Moreover, in this English education system, some students are afraid to make mistakes in conversation. They are often afraid of making mistakes in pronunciation and grammar. Then, students do not speak in English with other students to avoid these risks. It makes students feel bored while studying English. To solve this problem, Japanese schools should change their education systems. In one example, schools invite native English speaker teachers to the class. In these classes, students should have chances to communicate in English with native speakers. However, many schools do not have enough native English speaker teachers now. In Japan, there are 19 thousand elementary schools and 10 thousand junior high schools.<sup>12</sup> In contrast, there are 20 thousand native speakers.<sup>13</sup> In urban cities, there are many native speakers, but in the

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<sup>10</sup> Diana Ploscaru, "How Many People in Japan Speak English?," History of English, 2024

<sup>11</sup> Anna Fleck, "The Top Performing Places for Education," statista, 2023

<sup>12</sup> Unknown, "Number of educational institutions in Japan in 2023, by type," statista, 2024

<sup>13</sup> Charlie Moritz, "ALT Survey Results Show Many Are Disappointed With Current Conditions," jobsinJapan, 2023

countryside, one teacher goes to several schools. The Japanese government has to increase the amount of English native speakers. To speak with native speakers, students can know how to pronounce some words and correct grammar. This learning method is good for students in practical communication. Students can understand incorrect things in conversation. In addition, speaking with native speakers reduces the negative minds of students. Students are not afraid to make mistakes. Conversely, students can have confidence in themselves whilst speaking English. Therefore, they can improve their English quickly. Increasing opportunities to use English in conversation is important and the best way to get better English skills.

In conclusion, the Japanese English learning system makes learning English difficult. In this system, students can not speak English fluently. A lot of students are afraid to make mistakes in conversation. To help Japanese students be able to speak English fluently, Japanese schools should change the education system. Now in Japanese schools, there are a few opportunities to speak with native speakers. To communicate with native speakers, students can know correct pronunciation and fix grammar. Then, Japan will be one of the countries where people can speak English.

### III

In the last decade, many people have started learning languages in Japan. In Japan, English is the most popular language and English is learned by many Japanese people. This trend also happens around the world. Many people start learning English. In 2023, there are approximately 1.5 billion people who speak English natively or as a second language in the world.<sup>14</sup> English has the highest number of speakers, so English is one of the good ways to communicate with other language speakers in personal situations or at work. Then, many people start to learn English from earlier ages. In European countries, students normally start to learn

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<sup>14</sup> S. Galan, "The most spoken languages worldwide in 2023," statista, 2025

foreign languages as a required subject from ages 6 to 9. Moreover, in more than 20 European countries, students must study a second language for one year at least.<sup>15</sup> Also in Japan, students start studying English in elementary school. However, when looking at the English Proficiency EF Index score in 2023, Japan had a low score compared with European countries including Netherlands, Austria, and Denmark.<sup>16</sup> Therefore, it can be said that Japan is weak at English from this analysis. It depends on the survey, but there are many consequences that show that less than 20 to 30% of Japanese people can speak English fluently.<sup>17</sup> In this essay, the cause and effect of low English level will be discussed.

Now, many Japanese people are learning English. However, they are not good at speaking English. This situation came from several causes of the English Education system in Japan. Firstly, there is importance in reading and writing in Japanese schools' English education. These skills are mainly for passing the examinations. Also, this system has the time for practical skills like listening and speaking, but these times are lacking.<sup>18</sup> In this system, students miss the time to get English, which was used in real life and students can not get fluent English. In this class, there are a few conversation opportunities, discussions with other students, and presentations in English. This system does not have a process for students to learn English from mistakes, so a lot of students are afraid to make mistakes in conversation. Many students think that making mistakes in conversation is embarrassing. Also, students feel shame in presentations in English, because they might make mistakes in the presentation. Paul Doyon in Asahi university noted that most Japanese students think they are shy in class, which has 30 students, and oppose students

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<sup>15</sup> Devlin Kat, "Most European students are learning a foreign language in school while Americans lag," Pew Research Center, 2018

<sup>16</sup> Unknown, "English Proficiency by Country 2025," WORLD POPULATION REVIEW, 2025

<sup>17</sup> Diana Ploscaru, "How Many People in Japan Speak English?," historyofenglish, 2025

<sup>18</sup> Tsunagulocal, "6 Reasons Why Japanese Cannot Speak English According to a Japanese Local," Tsunagulocal, 2020

who are only 2 to 3.<sup>19</sup> From this education system, half of the students do not like to learn English. Many students think that English is the most useful subject in the future. However, English was also rated as a hated subject for students.<sup>20</sup> Then, many students do not try to learn English. Because of this, they do not like to speak English, so they do not have chances to speak English with native speakers in their life. To have this chance, some people go to study abroad. To study abroad, students can get good conversation skills and correct pronunciation. However, the students who want to go study abroad is not a lot. In 2023, the number of Japanese studying abroad was about 66,000. The Japanese government sets a goal to send 500,000 students overseas by 2033.<sup>21</sup> Nevertheless, it is difficult to achieve this goal by 2033 if current education situations continue. Thus, Japanese students need conversations to get better English skills. Because of the lack of conversation, students are not able to communicate in English. It creates barriers to global communication. The weakness of speaking English makes it difficult in international business and academic activities. It can make Japanese less competitive in the international community.

In summary, Japanese people are weak at speaking English. Japan was ranked low in the English Proficiency EF Index score. This outcome comes from the current Japanese education system in English. It affects a lot of things about the future of Japan. English is the most common language spoken in the whole world. Many people speak English in international conversations. If this situation continues in Japan, Japan is not going to participate in global competition. Japan should come up with ideas for solving this English education system problem. Then, Japan can

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<sup>19</sup> Doyon Paul, "Shyness in the Japanese EFL Class: Why It Is a Problem, What It Is, What Causes It, and What to Do About It," Jalt Publication, 2000

<sup>20</sup> Unknown, "Japanese Students See English as Useful for the Future, But Many Dislike It," nippon.com, 2021

<sup>21</sup> Nash Polly, "Japanese study abroad doubles in one year," The Pie network, 2024

be a country that is good at speaking English and can join the international conversation in English.

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## The Benefits and Drawbacks of Canada's Immigration Policy

### I

In 2022, the Canadian government announced that it wanted to attract 500,000 new immigrants per year by 2025, and it estimates that 1.5 million people would migrate to the area.<sup>1</sup> In the same year, the government granted more than 600,000 new temporary work permits to foreign nationals.<sup>2</sup> Since the approval of the first immigration law in 1869, Canada has welcomed immigrants from all over the world for many years. The country has coped with the Great Depression, two world wars, and rapid population and economic growth while repeatedly modifying and revising its immigration policies. In particular, the government decided to use multiculturalism as a Canadian national policy, and they have created an open and selective immigration system that embraces diverse races and cultures since the late 20th century. Thus, Canada is one of the most representative multiculturalist societies in the world, and as a global leader in resettling immigrants, it has an immigration policy that is often touted as a model for other countries. To determine how Canada balances its need for immigration with the associated social culture and economic complexities, this essay will explore the benefits and challenges of Canada's immigration policies from many angles.

Canada's ambitious immigration plan has brought positive outcomes including economic growth, addressing population decline, securing the workforce, and promoting diversity. One of the advantages of this is their significant contribution to economic growth. In Canada, nearly a quarter of Canada's population is immigrant and this percentage is the highest of any G7

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<sup>1</sup> Robin Levinson-King, "Canada: Why the country wants to bring in 1.5m immigrants by 2025", BBC News, November 21, 2022

<sup>2</sup> Diana Roy and Amelia Cheatham, "What Is Canada's Immigration Policy?", Council on Foreign Relations, March 28, 2024

country.<sup>3</sup> According to the Catalyst, when immigrants join the labor force, they increase the productive capacity of the economy and increase GDP. It has not only raised their income but also increased the income of the indigenous population. This phenomenon is known as the "immigrant surplus".<sup>4</sup> As a result, the economy could grow more strongly, and the increased labor supply could lead to lower production costs and lower prices for consumers. Moreover, this article said that the increase in high-skilled immigrants has been a trend evident since the 1990s. It has been associated with innovation and, in particular, with higher rates of patenting by immigrants.<sup>5</sup> Elsewhere, a 2017 National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine report found that immigration has an overall positive impact on the economy.<sup>6</sup> In fact, a study by the Economic Policy Institute, which surveyed data from 1994 to 2007 found that immigration raised wages for U.S.-born workers by 0.4% (or \$3.68 per week), and also for U.S.-born workers without a high school education by 0.3% (or \$1.58 per week).<sup>7</sup> It has long been claimed that immigrants steal jobs from existing residents. However, recent studies have shown that immigrants stimulate local economies by triggering innovation and boosting wages.<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, "More immigration will create more economic growth", Tarek Hassan, a research fellow of the National Bureau of Economic Research and the Center for Economic Policy Research claims. Also, he noted "That creates more local economic growth, which raises the wages of those already there".<sup>9</sup> Another factor is measures to address population decline and workforce availability. Immigrants now contribute about two-thirds of Canada's population

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<sup>3</sup> Diana Roy and Amelia Cheatham, "What Is Canada's Immigration Policy?", Council on Foreign Relations, March 28, 2024

<sup>4</sup> Pia Orrenius, "Benefits of Immigration Outweigh the Costs", The Catalyst, date unknown

<sup>5</sup> Pia Orrenius, "Benefits of Immigration Outweigh the Costs", The Catalyst, date unknown

<sup>6</sup> Daniel Thomas Mollenkamp, "How Immigration Affects the Economy", Investopedia, January 18, 2024

<sup>7</sup> Daniel Thomas Mollenkamp, "How Immigration Affects the Economy", Investopedia, January 18, 2024

<sup>8</sup> Andrew Thurston, "Do Immigrants and Immigration Help the Economy?", THE BRINK, April 4, 2024

<sup>9</sup> Andrew Thurston, "Do Immigrants and Immigration Help the Economy?", THE BRINK, April 4, 2024

growth, helping to maintain the labor force and improve skills.<sup>10</sup> In addition, immigrants could contribute to innovation and entrepreneurial activity, bringing diverse perspectives to the economy. This is not limited to Canada, immigrants are also a large and growing share of the labor force in OECD countries. In 2022, immigrants will average just over 15% of all workers in OECD countries as a whole, with nine of these countries reaching 20% or more.<sup>11</sup> Giovanni Perri, an economics professor at the University of California, Davis asserts more immigrants to the economy of the global North is desirable from a demographic perspective. Additionally, he said “It would curb population decline, reduce the size of the labor force, improve age dependency rates, and produce positive financial benefits”.<sup>12</sup> As a matter of fact, International immigration in Ontario has been a major source of labor force growth in recent years. From 2007 to 2014, immigrants made up 39% of labor force growth, this percentage grew to 63% from 2015 to 2022.<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, according to the census in 2021, the proportion of recent immigrants with higher education qualifications has been increasing. In particular, among working-age immigrants in Ontario, the percentage of those with a bachelor’s degree or higher rose from 34.7% in 1980 to 1990 to 64.2% in 2016 to 2021.<sup>14</sup> Lastly, immigrants bring rich cultural values to society through their diverse backgrounds. Immigrants perform as a hub of cultural diversity and play an important role in the evolution of global culture as well. As stated by the RESIDENT, it’s spread across a variety of fields, including food diversity, artistic contributions, language evolution, workforce diversity, and entrepreneurial impact.<sup>15</sup> Looking at the countries

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<sup>10</sup> Government of Canada, “Population growth: Migratory increase overtakes natural increase”, Government of Canada, August 8, 2024

<sup>11</sup> OECD, “Economic impact of migration”, OECD, date unknown

<sup>12</sup> Daniel Thomas Mollenkamp, “How Immigration Affects the Economy”, Investopedia, January 18, 2024

<sup>13</sup> Financial Accountability Office of Ontario, “Labour Market Outcomes of Immigrants in Ontario and its Major Cities”, Financial Accountability Office of Ontario, November 8, 2023

<sup>14</sup> Financial Accountability Office of Ontario, “Labour Market Outcomes of Immigrants in Ontario and its Major Cities”, Financial Accountability Office of Ontario, November 8, 2023

<sup>15</sup> RESIDENT, “The Role of Immigration in Shaping Cultural Diversity”, RESIDENT, date unknown

of birth of immigrants in Canada, India has the largest number of immigrants at 18.6%, followed by the Philippines at 11.4%, China at 8.9%, and Syria at 4.8%. Outside of Asia and the Middle East, the United States made up for 3%, France for 2%, and the United Kingdom for 1.7%. This diverse immigrant background makes Canada more culturally and linguistically diverse than ever before.<sup>16</sup> For instance, as evidence of the growing diversity of Canada, the 2021 census reported more than 450 different native languages.<sup>17</sup> This is due to the Canadian Multiculturalism Act of 1988, which preserves this diversity as part of the country's identity.<sup>18</sup> From a business and organizational perspective, Josh Bersin who is an industry analyst and thought leader states that “Companies that incorporate diversity and inclusion in all aspects of their business statistically outperform their peers”. Additionally, enterprises with a diverse workforce are 35% more likely to achieve economic profits than those without a diverse workforce.<sup>19</sup>

On the other hand, Canada's immigration strategy has given rise to several challenges which are an increased burden on public services, cultural conflicts and diversity problems, and concerns and prejudice over the expansion of crime and public safety. Professor Donnelly said, “People's positive emotions have changed over the past few years since before”.<sup>20</sup> That is there has been an unprecedented surge in the number of temporary residents coming to Canada. According to the Canadian Bureau of International Education, the number of international students increased by nearly 30% between 2022 and 2023. In addition, the number of temporary foreign workers in Canada has doubled in the past five years, according to government data.<sup>21</sup> In 2023, a survey by the Toronto-based Environics Institute showed that 44% of Canadians felt

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<sup>16</sup> Vimal Sivakumar, “How one recent immigration trend is helping boost Canada's linguistic and cultural diversity”, CIC NEWS, March 21,2023

<sup>17</sup> Vimal Sivakumar, “How one recent immigration trend is helping boost Canada's linguistic and cultural diversity”, CIC NEWS, March 21,2023

<sup>18</sup> Nadine Yousif and Jessica Murphy, “How Canada soured on immigration”, BBC, October 25, 2024

<sup>19</sup> Roxanne Addison, “The Positive Impact of Diversity and Immigrants”, Avantpage, July 6, 2022

<sup>20</sup> Nadine Yousif and Jessica Murphy, “How Canada soured on immigration”, BBC, October 25, 2024

<sup>21</sup> Nadine Yousif and Jessica Murphy, “How Canada soured on immigration”, BBC, October 25, 2024

there were too many immigrants, and this proportion is a significant increase from 27% the last year.<sup>22</sup> Also, a survey by the Association for Canadian Studies (ACS) Leger reveals that two-thirds of Canadians consider current immigration levels to be “too high”.<sup>23</sup> From this, Jack Jedwab, Chief Executive Officer of ACS said “Negative sentiments toward immigration have remarkably increased, reaching levels not seen in the past 20 years”.<sup>24</sup> Above all, there are growing concerns about housing affordability and the burden on social services. About three out of four respondents expressed concern about the impact of increased immigration on housing and social services in a public opinion survey of Leger and the Association of Canadian Studies.<sup>25</sup> Most people believe that current immigration rates are contributing to the housing shortage and stress on healthcare services, and calling Canada's immigration policy “too generous”.<sup>26</sup> In this situation, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau stated that in response to public dissatisfaction with the shortage of social services and rising housing costs, he intends to reduce the number of immigrants allowed in Canada drastically. They announced plans to take the most strict action to reduce the number of permanent residents accepted by 21% by 2025.<sup>27</sup> As for the issue of cultural clashes and diversity issues, the cultural values and religious traditions brought by immigrants sometimes conflict with the existing culture of Canada, which causes tensions within the community. These disagreements can lead to misunderstandings between immigrants and locals and, in some cases, could harm state-to-state relationships. On June 18, 2023, a Sikh

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<sup>22</sup> Diana Roy and Amelia Cheatham, “What Is Canada’s Immigration Policy?”, Council on Foreign Relations, March 28, 2024

<sup>23</sup> Ari David Blaff, “Nearly two-thirds of Canadians feel immigration levels too high: poll”, FINANCIAL POST, October 17, 2024

<sup>24</sup> Diane Francis, “Canada's immigration problems are of Trudeau's own making”, FINANCIAL POST, October 22, 2024

<sup>25</sup> Robin Levinson-King, “Canada: Why the country wants to bring in 1.5m immigrants by 2025”, BBC News, November 21, 2022

<sup>26</sup> Anna Mehler Paperny, “Backlash against immigrants challenges Canada's welcoming image”, Reuters, September 6, 2024

<sup>27</sup> Nadine Yousif and Jessica Murphy, “How Canada soured on immigration”, BBC, October 25, 2024

leader was assassinated in Canada, and this incident affected not only Canadian security but also diplomatic relations with India.<sup>28</sup> These events highlight the impact of immigration policies on political and social conditions inside and outside the country. Moreover, Queens University political scientist Christian Leuprecht pointed out that in recent years, there has been a sharp increase in the number of racist and xenophobic postings online targeting immigrants and minorities in Canada.<sup>29</sup> Regarding fears and misconceptions about crime and public safety, concerns are spreading. However, there is no solid evidence that immigration increases crime rates. In a study of countries where the percentage of immigrants tripled in less than a decade, researchers found that while immigration has a significant impact on people's perception of crime, it has no impact on actual crime.<sup>30</sup> It is clear that immigration has no direct impact on crime rates, but many people have a deeply wrong notion that immigration increases crime through a study, led by McGill University economics professor Nicholas Azenman. Also, he said, "Many people seem to believe there is a link between crime and immigration".<sup>31</sup> Nevertheless when immigrants commit serious crimes, these misconceptions are further reinforced, leading to louder calls for reducing immigration. Fairly or not, this contributes to the formation of negative people's sentiments toward immigrants.

In conclusion, Canada's immigration policy has brought significant benefits, including economic growth, population stabilization, and the promotion of cultural diversity. In addition, Canada is one of the most multicultural countries by immigration policy and bringing positive impacts to society as a whole. However, this immigration strategy has also brought several problems, including housing affordability, stress on social services, cultural conflicts, and

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<sup>28</sup> Soutik Biswas, "How relations between India and Canada hit rock bottom", BBC, October 15, 2024

<sup>29</sup> Anna Mehler Paperny, "Backlash against immigrants challenges Canada's welcoming image", Reuters, September 6, 2024

<sup>30</sup> McGill University, "Does immigration really increase crime?", McGill University, March 29, 2023

<sup>31</sup> Phil Gurski, "Canada's open-door immigration policy shouldn't mean anything goes", OTTAWA CITIZEN, June 10, 2024

concerns about public safety. In the last few years, public opinion has become divided over the impact of immigration on the economy and society, with growing concerns about the increasing number of immigrants. Therefore the Canadian government continues to adjust its immigration policies and work to balance the contributions of immigrants with the concerns of its citizens. This process would positively impact Canada's future and Canada will be able to maintain its position as a global leader of multiculturalism.

## II

In 2023, Prime Minister Fumio Kishida opened the Japanese Diet with alarming remarks, warning that Japan is “on the brink of social dysfunction” due to the rapid decline in the birth rate, population, and labor force.<sup>32</sup> As the late Prime Minister Shinzo Abe also stated, “In contrast to Canada's unified and consistent immigration system, currently Japan lacks a comprehensive system for immigration and has historically chosen to adopt a piecemeal immigration policy to fill gaps in the labor market as well temporarily”.<sup>33</sup> In recent years, Japan has also expanded its immigration policy with a historic visa reform in 2019 in Tokyo. More than 345,000 new workers were able to immigrate to Japan over the next five years. Also, it allowed low-skilled workers to stay for five years and foreign workers with specialized skills to be allowed to stay indefinitely with their families.<sup>34</sup> As a result, Japan's foreign resident population will reach 3.1 million in 2022, and significant increases in the technical intern and student visa categories.<sup>35</sup> In addition, it has been implicated that Japan can emulate successful immigrant policy countries like Canada by targeting an influx of 1 million immigrants per year to combat

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<sup>32</sup> Scott Harrison, Momo Sakudo, “Japan Needs More Labour. Is Immigration the Answer?”, The Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada, August 25, 2023

<sup>33</sup> Scott Harrison, Momo Sakudo, “Japan Needs More Labour. Is Immigration the Answer?”, The Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada, August 25, 2023

<sup>34</sup> Martin Gelin, “Japan Radically Increased Immigration—and No One Protested”, Foreign Policy, June 23, 2020

<sup>35</sup> Scott Harrison, Momo Sakudo, “Japan Needs More Labour. Is Immigration the Answer?”, The Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada, August 25, 2023

population decline.<sup>36</sup> However, the reason why it has been so difficult for Japan to pursue its immigration policy to this extent is that various factors are intertwined and are deeply rooted. To understand the root causes of Japan's struggle to adopt a comprehensive immigration policy and the resulting social and economic consequences, this essay will analyze the historical cultural, social, and political factors that have shaped Japan's stance on immigration.

One of the causes of Japan's immigration policy not being promoted is historical and cultural. Bhupal Shrestha, a university lecturer in Japan said “Japanese society is open to immigrants, but it is still conservative in some ways and I think this is due to the lack of opportunities for cultural exchange with them”.<sup>37</sup> In fact, immigration (foreign workers) is at an all-time high, up from 480,000 in 2008. However, this number represents only 1% of Japan's population, compared to 5% in the UK or 17% in the US.<sup>38</sup> Furthermore, historian Tessa Morris Suzuki argues that “the legal and institutional framework that restricts immigration to Japan today was created during the postwar Allied occupation of Japan”. In the *Borderline Japan: Foreigners and Frontier Controls in the Postwar Era*. She also wrote a new image of Japan, emerging as a “self-contained, unique, ethnically pure country in the postwar decades.”<sup>39</sup> Historically, Japan has traditionally not been very accepting of immigrants because Japan is an island nation and was once strongly isolationist which was national isolation. Until the middle of the 1800s, entry and exit to foreign countries was strictly restricted in Japan, and violations could even result in the death penalty.<sup>40</sup> In contrast, in modern Japan, people have come to think of their country as culturally homogeneous and with a strong identity. In particular, language and cultural knowledge gaps are the main challenges faced by migrant workers, according to

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<sup>36</sup> Scott Harrison, Momo Sakudo, “Japan Needs More Labour. Is Immigration the Answer?”, The Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada, August 25, 2023

<sup>37</sup> Bryan Lufkin, “More seniors, more foreigners: How Japan is changing”, BBC News, December 10, 2018

<sup>38</sup> Bryan Lufkin, “More seniors, more foreigners: How Japan is changing”, BBC News, December 10, 2018

<sup>39</sup> Martin Gelin, “Japan Radically Increased Immigration—and No One Protested”, *Foreign Policy*, June 23, 2020

<sup>40</sup> Bryan Lufkin, “More seniors, more foreigners: How Japan is changing”, BBC News, December 10, 2018

Masahito Nakai, an immigration lawyer who noted that “obtaining a visa is only the beginning of the migration process, and assimilation into Japanese culture is very difficult”.<sup>41</sup> Moreover, Chikako Usui who is a sociologist at the University of Missouri-St. Louis points out that Japan's isolationist history and the homogeneity emphasized in its self-perception have put immigrants in a difficult position. She emphasizes that the unspoken rules and subtle social cues that shape Japanese society contribute to anxiety about outsiders, making even native Japanese weary. The Japanese concept of “reading the air” which Ms. Usui mentioned refers to the act of perceiving the mood of the situation and understanding acting on what is implicitly required.<sup>42</sup> Also, this is deeply rooted in Japanese culture, which emphasizes group harmony and prioritizes group needs and feelings over individual desires. “To “read the air” requires cultural, historical, and inside knowledge of the people participating in the conversation in communication tends to be indirect in Japan” stated Yoko Hasegawa, Professor of Japanese at the University of California, Berkeley.<sup>43</sup> In a way, this involves a form of understanding that is almost telepathic. Therefore, this advanced social skill is difficult for foreigners to master, let alone for those who do not share their cultural backgrounds, so it is also a factor that contributes to suspicion and discomfort toward immigrants and outsiders. Another historical and cultural factor is that Japan is considered one of the most ethnically unitary countries in the world. Estimates for 2022 indicate that approximately 97.5% of the total population will be Japanese, with the remainder being 0.6% Chinese, 0.4% Vietnamese, 0.3% Korean, and 1.2% other (including Filipinos, Brazilians, Nepalese, Indonesians, Americans, and Taiwanese).<sup>44</sup> These data show that ethnic and cultural homogeneity as “Japanese” is deeply rooted in Japanese society. This ethnic unity creates a sense

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<sup>41</sup> Bryan Lufkin, “More seniors, more foreigners: How Japan is changing”, BBC News, December 10, 2018

<sup>42</sup> Bryan Lufkin, “More seniors, more foreigners: How Japan is changing”, BBC News, December 10, 2018

<sup>43</sup> Bryan Lufkin, “How 'reading the air' keeps Japan running”, BBC News, January 29, 2020

<sup>44</sup> THE WORLD FACTBOOK, “Japan”, THE WORLD FACTBOOK, January 3, 2025

that sharing the same ethnicity and culture is the key to maintaining social cohesion, and contributes to the tendency to be cautious about accepting different cultures and ethnic groups. The resulting factors reinforce negative stereotypes about immigrants and it limits the opportunities for immigrants to be accepted in Japanese society.

The second factor is Japan's social structure and economic aspects. Japan has a rapidly aging population, with 29.1% of the total population aged 65 and over.<sup>45</sup> The elderly population is believed to tend to value traditional values and is often resistant to new social changes and policies. On the other hand, the attitude of Japanese society as a whole toward immigration policy has changed significantly in recent years. In a 2018 Pew Research Center survey, 58% of respondents said Japan should accept the same number of immigrants, while 23% said Japan should accept more. Furthermore, 59% of respondents rated immigrants as strengthening Japan through their work and talents, revealing a majority of support for immigration policies.<sup>46</sup> In a survey released in May 2024, 62% of Japanese respondents also supported granting more visas to skilled foreign workers.<sup>47</sup> Additionally, according to a recent Nikkei newspaper survey, about 70 percent of Japanese respondents said it would be "good" to have more foreigners in Japan. This article said, "Nationalist, anti-immigrant groups make up possibly only 1 to 2 percent of the electorate". Overall, the current situation confirms the growing understanding and support for immigration reform.<sup>48</sup> However, even with this change in people's awareness, immigration policy in Japanese society is not without its challenges. There are persistent concerns that immigrants will take jobs from their citizens or increase the burden on social security due to widening

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<sup>45</sup> Statistics Bureau of Japan, "Current Population Estimates as of October 1, 2023", Statistics Bureau of Japan, October 1, 2023

<sup>46</sup> Becca Faber, "Japan is standing on the verge of whether [it] can continue to function as a society.", HARVARD INTERNATIONAL REVIEW, October 30, 2024

<sup>47</sup> Becca Faber, "Japan is standing on the verge of whether [it] can continue to function as a society.", HARVARD INTERNATIONAL REVIEW, October 30, 2024

<sup>48</sup> Martin Gelin, "Japan Radically Increased Immigration—and No One Protested", Foreign Policy, June 23, 2020

economic gaps and increased competition in the labor market. Shiro Yabushita who is a Professor Emeritus, at the Faculty of Political Science and Economics, at Waseda University claims that while such fears are often driven by emotional arguments, evidence from other countries offers valuable insights.<sup>49</sup> For instance, numerous studies in the United States have examined the impact of immigration on the employment levels of American workers with most concluding that immigration does not have a significantly negative effect on reduced employment opportunities for native workers. Additionally, a recent meta-analysis of a large number of studies has shown similar results.<sup>50</sup> As Japan advances its immigration policy, it is crucial to develop policies based on empirical evidence rather than unfounded concerns.

Finally, political factors have greatly influenced Japan's immigration policy. Japan has historically had a poor history of immigration, which has been influenced by the fact that immigration issues have not been managed well in the past. For example, the acceptance of foreign workers did not proceed smoothly, and discrimination and prejudice against foreigners became a problem in local communities after the war. This experience has led to a cautious approach to immigration policy in Japan. Moreover, the government enforced a strict immigration policy through the Immigration Control and Refugee Act of 1952, which generally only allowed immigrants on work visas or visas for Japanese descent and family members to stay in Japan and the factor of Japan's immigration policy did not promote immigration until the population crisis.<sup>51</sup> Foreign labor intake is very limited, mainly for unskilled workers, and as of 2015, foreign workers accounted for only 2.5% of the total labor force.<sup>52</sup> The creation of the

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<sup>49</sup> Shiro Yabushita, "The baseless emotional argument that "immigrants take jobs.", TOYOKEIZAI ONLINE, November 2, 2016

<sup>50</sup> Shiro Yabushita, "The baseless emotional argument that "immigrants take jobs.", TOYOKEIZAI ONLINE, November 2, 2016

<sup>51</sup> Becca Faber, "Japan is standing on the verge of whether [it] can continue to function as a society.", HARVARD INTERNATIONAL REVIEW, October 30, 2024

<sup>52</sup> Jun SAITO, "Historical Background of the Japanese Restrictive Immigration Policy", Japan Center for Economic Research, July 15, 2022

“specified skills” system in 2019 has fundamentally changed Japan's immigration policy, says sociologist and immigration expert Naoto Higuchi. It has made it possible for foreigners with limited skills to obtain work visas, paving the way for possible permanent residency.<sup>53</sup> Although the government still does not clearly state that this is an “immigration policy”. This means not only is it difficult to obtain Japanese citizenship, permanent residence permits, and acceptance as a refugee, but it is also extremely difficult to obtain a work visa, so there remains a major difference between the policies of immigration abroad and domestically.<sup>54</sup> One of the reasons why the government has so far avoided discussion on immigration, one reason for this is the existence of people among the ruling party's supporters who hold the abstract objection that “the increase in immigration will result in the loss of Japanese culture and traditions. Some may have concerns that it will worsen the security of society, however in reality formal immigration is not progressing leading to an increase in the number of illegal immigrants, and their inability to find regular jobs is contributing to the deterioration of public safety.<sup>55</sup> Other government immigration policies are biased toward compensating for short-term labor shortages. The “technical internship” policy, which aims to employ foreign workers for a fixed period is lacking in structures to support long-term settlement and social integration, which contributes to the tendency to view immigrants as transients. There are many challenges in the treatment of foreign workers and their living environment as well. According to the Cabinet Office's economic white paper for fiscal 2024, which targets more than 2 million foreign workers foreign workers are paid 28% less than Japanese because of the structure of Japanese society, which limits the ability to

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<sup>53</sup> Higuchi Naoto, “Japan’s Incremental Immigration Reform: A Recipe for Failure”, nippon.com, August, 25, 2023

<sup>54</sup> Jun SAITO, “Historical Background of the Japanese Restrictive Immigration Policy”, Japan Center for Economic Research, July 15, 2022

<sup>55</sup> Kishimoto Yoshiyuki, “What I want people who think that more immigrants in Japan will “worsen public safety” and “take away jobs” to know.”, DIAMOND online, April 10, 2024

change jobs and emphasizes seniority, making it difficult for immigrants to find suitable jobs.<sup>56</sup> In a particularly controversial trainee program, it has been reported that foreign trainees are more than twice as likely to die from work-related causes as their Japanese counterparts.<sup>57</sup> Issues are also becoming apparent in local communities. In recent years, it has become conspicuous that foreigners do not respect Japanese laws and culture and act as they please. In July 2023, nearly 100 foreigners gathered at a hospital in Kawaguchi City, Saitama Prefecture, causing a commotion. The expansion of the Kurdish community from Turkey has caused friction over lifestyle and garbage disposal rules among residents.<sup>58</sup> These social tensions could be further worsened by sudden changes in immigration policies and measures that ignore social concerns.

In conclusion, immigration policy in Japan continues to be a complex issue involving historical, cultural, social, and political factors. Emphasis on Japan's closed nature and cultural homogeneity due to isolation have created a distrust of outsiders and made it difficult for immigrants to assimilate. The cultural practice of “reading the air” and a strong sense of ethnic unity are also major barriers to immigrants' integration into Japanese society. Socially and economically, while an aging population and labor shortages have increased the need for immigration, concerns based on emotionalism about job competition, the burden on social security, and the economic impact of immigration have hindered progress on a comprehensive policy. Politically, the short history of immigration policy, inadequate treatment of immigration issues, and the influence of conservative views have resulted in cautious and piecemeal reforms. Addressing these challenges requires evidence-based policies that balance economic necessity and social concerns. In particular, ignoring public opinion when implementing immigration

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<sup>56</sup> KIU SUGANO, “Foreign workers in Japan face 28% wage gap: government paper”, NIKKEI Asia, August 24, 2024

<sup>57</sup> Martin Gelin, “Japan Radically Increased Immigration—and No One Protested”, Foreign Policy, June 23, 2020

<sup>58</sup> NHK, “Kawaguchi City, Saitama, makes an unusual appeal to the State over the Kurds. Why? What happened at the site?”, NHK, February 2, 2024

policies can lead to social unrest, and sudden policy changes that do not address social concerns risk expanding the divide between immigrants and citizens. In addition, significant improvements are needed to create a more equitable and sustainable immigration policy to address Japan's changing demographics, but there is a need to act with caution. Therefore, Japan needs extensive discussions on increasing social acceptance, and efforts to promote coexistence with local communities while protecting the rights of immigrants need to be pursued in parallel with the development of its immigration policy.

### III

The total population has been steadily declining after peaking at 128 million in 2008, and Japan is facing a severe crisis of rapid population decline and aging.<sup>59</sup> Additionally, the working-age population is expected to decrease by 19 million between 2023 and 2050.<sup>60</sup> Under these conditions, labor shortages are becoming increasingly severe, and there are major concerns about the sustainability of the social security system. To address these challenges, the introduction of immigration policies is becoming an unavoidable option. On the other hand, Canada has an open and selective immigration system that welcomes diverse races and cultures. Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) released the “Immigration Levels Plan for 2025-2027,” clearly stating the target for accepting permanent residents entering Canada in the following year on October 24 in 2024.<sup>61</sup> The plan sets an admission goal for permanent residents in 2025 and includes nominal commitments for 2026 and 2027. Moreover, the program consists of an acceptance target for temporary residents, including foreign workers and foreign students, for the first time. In addition to this, the government has indicated that it is rethinking

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<sup>59</sup> Becca Faber, “Improved Immigration: Japan’s Solution to Its Population Crisis”, HARVARD INTERNATIONAL REVIEW, October 30, 2024

<sup>60</sup> Becca Faber, “Improved Immigration: Japan’s Solution to Its Population Crisis”, HARVARD INTERNATIONAL REVIEW, October 30, 2024

<sup>61</sup> Government of Canada, “2025–2027 Immigration Levels Plan”, Government of Canada, October 24, 2024

the overall balance of immigration to reduce the number of temporary residents to 5% of the Canadian population by the end of 2026.<sup>62</sup> Thus, Canada is developing a long-term and flexible immigration strategy to maintain its demographic structure and economic growth. Canada's immigration policy, which has realized a multicultural society, can offer an important model for Japan. This essay will suggest solutions to gradually introduce or promote immigration policies in a way that is appropriate for Japan, considering cases such as Germany and South Korea, which similarly have histories as ethnically homogeneous nations.

First of all, as Japan introduces its immigration policy, a gradual and limited introduction of immigrants rather than a large number at once would be an effective method to reduce the public's anxiety. Canada has developed a successful case study of immigration to a limited number of regions and occupations through its "Pilot Programs". For example, there is an "Atlantic Migration Pilot" for the Atlantic area and a "Rural and Northern Migration Pilot" to promote migration to rural areas and other flexible systems that are in place for each region.<sup>63</sup> Moreover, there are pilots by occupation, including a pilot version of BC Tech, a pilot for home-based child care and home-based support workers, and the Agri-Food sector, which the program contributes to immigrant retention and community activation. Permanent residency acquired through the pilot program does not come with limitations, so this means that anyone seriously considering immigration to Canada cannot afford to ignore the pilot program.<sup>64</sup> Similarly, Germany is facing a shortage of skilled workers, like many European countries. In 2022, the country's labor shortage will grow to a record high, and according to the Institute for

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<sup>62</sup> Government of Canada, "2025–2027 Immigration Levels Plan", Government of Canada, October 24, 2024

<sup>63</sup> Eivy Joy Quito, "By Pilot Your Immigration Journey to Success with Canada's Pilot Programs", IMMIGRATION CONSULTING FIRM, May 4, 2021

<sup>64</sup> Eivy Joy Quito, "By Pilot Your Immigration Journey to Success with Canada's Pilot Programs", IMMIGRATION CONSULTING FIRM, May 4, 2021

Employment Research (IAB), there are 1.74 million vacant positions across Germany.<sup>65</sup> Nearly half of all companies surveyed by the Munich-based research organization IFO were affected by labor shortages and had to downsize their business.<sup>66</sup> Therefore, the German government has designed the “Opportunity Card (Chancenkarte)” based on a point system to accept immigrants in stages based on skills, experience, language ability, and other evaluation criteria to change this complicated entry process for applicants from non-EU countries, the immigration of qualified workers from other countries.<sup>67</sup> It is part of a strategy proposed by Labor Minister Hubertus Heil to cope with the country's labor shortage and targets those who do not yet have a labor contract in Germany. Furthermore, the German immigration reform was introduced in three steps, and this law was expected to make it easier for third-country nationals to work in Germany. This could increase the number of non-EU workers in Germany by 60,000 per year.<sup>68</sup> Japan recruits workers to fill specific labor shortages in the Japanese economy through the Specified Skills (SSW) and High Skilled Foreign Professionals (HSFP) programs as well.<sup>69</sup> In the case of the SSW, its support for SSW workers includes salaries equal to those of Japanese workers. While a limited framework has been introduced, however, to qualify for this program, immigration must pass the Japanese Language Proficiency Test, which is often difficult for foreigners.

The selection of receiving regions and a system of decentralized acceptance are essential for immigration policy to function effectively. In Canada, the Provincial Nominee Program (PNP) allows each province to select immigrants according to its specific regional

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<sup>65</sup> Angela Symons, “Germany's new immigration law is making it easier for foreign workers to move there”, Euro News, October 16, 2023

<sup>66</sup> Angela Symons, “Germany's new immigration law is making it easier for foreign workers to move there”, Euro News, October 16, 2023

<sup>67</sup> CHANCENKARTE DEUTSCHLAND, “Advantages for applicants from non-EU countries”, CHANCENKARTE DEUTSCHLAND, date unknown

<sup>68</sup> Angela Symons, “Germany's new immigration law is making it easier for foreign workers to move there”, Euro News, October 16, 2023

<sup>69</sup> Becca Faber, “Improved Immigration: Japan’s Solution to Its Population Crisis”, HARVARD INTERNATIONAL REVIEW, October 30, 2024

needs.<sup>70</sup> Through this program, applicants are granted permanent residency as the ultimate result of their efforts. This system is based on the principle of concurrent jurisdiction, under which the federal and provincial governments share responsibility for immigration. The federal government is responsible for the country's immigration laws and regulations through Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC). In contrast, states have some discretion over immigration through their state nomination programs. For instance, the BC Provincial Nominee Program (BC PNP) is an economic immigration program that allows economic immigrants to choose to live in BC, fill jobs, or run a business in the province.<sup>71</sup> In addition, Alberta's Alberta Advantage Immigration Program (AAIP) aims to boost local economies by attracting candidates with specific skills and ambitions to start business ambitions in rural areas.<sup>72</sup> In this way, Canada's PNP functions as an effective framework for balancing immigration with the sustainable development of rural areas, preventing an overconcentration in urban centers. Similarly to Japan, South Korea has long maintained a strong sense of being an ethnically homogeneous nation, and has been slow to introduce immigration policies. South Korea has the world's lowest birth rate, which continues to fall year by year, and the birth rate in 2023 was 0.72.<sup>73</sup> Additionally, South Korea's Ministry of Employment and Labor says the country will need an additional 894,000 workers, especially in the service industry, to “achieve long-term economic growth projections” over the next decade.<sup>74</sup> However, public opinion on immigration is mixed as 95% of the country's population identifies as ethnically Korean.<sup>75</sup> “I'm worried about how South Korea will be able to

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<sup>70</sup> SOBIROVS BUSINESS IMMIGRATION LAWYERS, “PNP Canada: Provincial Nominee Programs – All You Need to Know.”, SOBIROVS BUSINESS IMMIGRATION LAWYERS, March 12, 2025

<sup>71</sup> BRITISH COLUMBIA, “About the BC Provincial Nominee Program”, BRITISH COLUMBIA, April 14, 2025

<sup>72</sup> Alberta, “Alberta Advantage Immigration Program”, Alberta, date unknown

<sup>73</sup> Suhnwook Lee, “Can families returning after centuries solve S Korea's population crisis?”, BBC, September 23, 2024

<sup>74</sup> Suhnwook Lee, “Can families returning after centuries solve S Korea's population crisis?”, BBC, September 23, 2024

<sup>75</sup> Suhnwook Lee, “Can families returning after centuries solve S Korea's population crisis?”, BBC, September 23, 2024

accept other immigrants”, said Seong Dong-gi, an expert on Goryeo-won at Inha University.<sup>76</sup>

As a result, there has been a movement to encourage people to settle in rural areas, for example, by accepting foreign spouses in recent years. As seen in this rural settlement model, immigrants tend to choose urban areas as their settlement destinations. Still, it is important to encourage migration to rural areas to combat population decline in rural areas. Therefore, rather than accepting them without proper planning, preparations must be made both nationally and locally to promote their integration into society and promote economic revitalization, because there is a lack of infrastructure and services in rural areas. It is predicted that Japan's rural areas will face increasingly difficult conditions in the future. According to the United Nations, about 8% of Japan's population lives in rural areas, and about 30% of residents are over 65 years old.<sup>77</sup> It is predicted that 50% of all rural communities will disappear by 2040, and welcoming immigrants has become a key issue for local governments as they think about their region's survival.<sup>78</sup> In Japan, in addition to U-turn and I-turn from urban areas to rural areas, the inclusion of immigrants from diverse backgrounds to local communities has the potential to increase regional diversity and sustainability. There is a need for a system that welcomes immigrants not simply as a labor force, but as new leaders in the region.

To realize a sustainable immigration policy, it is essential not only to improve the system but also to change the public's attitude and promote social acceptance. In Japan, there is a lack of understanding of diversity, and prejudices such as “immigration equals cultural clash” and “deteriorating public safety” remain deeply rooted, especially among the elderly. To overcome this current situation, it is necessary to raise awareness of multicultural coexistence through

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<sup>76</sup> Suhwook Lee, “Can families returning after centuries solve S Korea's population crisis?”, BBC, September 23, 2024

<sup>77</sup> Asia RESEARCH NEWS, “What lessons can be learned from Japan’s rural movement initiative, 15 years on?”, Asia RESEARCH NEWS, date unknown

<sup>78</sup> Cornelia Reiher, “(In)visible newcomers: Foreign workers and internal urban-rural migrants in Japan's countryside”, ScienceDirect, date unknown

education and the media. In this respect, Canadian multicultural education is a useful model. In Canada, multicultural education programs have been introduced that include ethnic studies, comparative religions, cultural activities, heritage language education, and education that fosters democratic values that respect cultural diversity is widely practiced.<sup>79</sup> Paul Gilroy takes the stance that “Rather than completely rejecting the idea of a starting point and common experience, we accept these as shared, but reject fixed identities”.<sup>80</sup> In addition, the Canadian Multicultural Education Foundation (CMEF) , established in 1990, plays an important role in promoting this type of social education, creating an environment in which citizens can naturally understand the significance of multicultural coexistence.<sup>81</sup> France is also working to promote understanding of immigrants as part of its social integration efforts. For example, the French National Museum of the History of Immigration aims to create a “common narrative” for the entire French nation by presenting the history and culture of immigrants.<sup>82</sup> Furthermore, Paris-based immigrant support group BAAM is working to eradicate prejudice against people of diverse backgrounds through educational and cultural activities.<sup>83</sup> Conversely, Japan has not shown much resistance to recent immigrants; the policy and cultural support for immigrants to fit into Japanese society is still sufficient. There is a need for language education, information on disaster prevention, the development of resources to promote cultural understanding, and legal protections against discrimination. Additionally, Japan is the only developed democratic country that lacks an anti-discrimination law or judicial system. Immigrants who face discrimination or

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<sup>79</sup> Rybinska, Yuliia Ponochovna-Rysak, Taisiia Guba, Larysa, “MULTICULTURALISM AND MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION IN CANADA”, ProQuest, date unknown

<sup>80</sup> Rybinska, Yuliia Ponochovna-Rysak, Taisiia Guba, Larysa, “MULTICULTURALISM AND MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION IN CANADA”, ProQuest, date unknown

<sup>81</sup> Canadian Multicultural Education Foundation, “Strengthening the Multicultural Fabric of Canada”, Canadian Multicultural Education Foundation, date unknown

<sup>82</sup> European Commission, “French National Immigration History Museum”, European Commission, date unknown

<sup>83</sup> BAAM, “Le bureau d’accueil et d’accompagnement des migrant.es”, BAAM, date unknown

unfair treatment find it difficult to seek help in the right way.<sup>84</sup> To build a sustainable immigration policy, Japan must not only focus on increasing the number of migrants but also create an environment where diversity is respected and protected through comprehensive policy and public education.

In conclusion, the introduction of immigration policies is one of the essential solutions to the population problems and issues of a declining birthrate and aging population that Japan faces. However, rather than rushing to introduce, the Japanese government should refer to the advanced examples of other countries, such as Canada and France. A careful approach that fully considers Japan's unique social structure and public sentiment is required. The three measures of solutions in this essay are gradual introduction, limited regional acceptance, and public awareness activities could provide sustainable solutions to the challenges facing Japan. Through these efforts, if society as a whole can build a foundation for coexistence with immigrants, Japan can evolve into a society that turns diversity into a strength in the future. Lastly, it is important to view immigration policy not simply as a means to secure labor, but as an important policy that will shape the future of society

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<sup>84</sup> Becca Faber, "Improved Immigration: Japan's Solution to Its Population Crisis", HARVARD INTERNATIONAL REVIEW, October 30, 2024

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## Public transportation systems in the world and Japan

### I

Japan's public transportation system is one of the best in the world. Many Japanese people travel daily, mainly by train, bus, car, taxi, and bicycle. In contrast, many countries, especially those in Europe, travel by cars, but Japan has something better than those countries. The Japanese rail network, particularly the Shinkansen, or "bullet trains," is renowned for its speed, reliability, and punctuality.<sup>1</sup> For example, Germany's Deutsche Bahn system is known for its efficiency, but it has faced criticisms for occasional delays, particularly during peak travel times.<sup>2</sup> Similarly, the United States, with its vast landscape and car-dependent culture, has struggled to develop an efficient train transportation system. In this essay, I will compare the public transportation systems in Japan and the rest of the world and explain the convenience of public transportation in Japan.

One of the things Japan does well is the integration of advanced technology into public transportation. The use of contactless payment systems like Suica and Pasma, as well as real-time tracking and mobile applications, makes the user experience seamless. Passengers can easily check train schedules, make payments, and plan routes using smartphones, ensuring smooth journeys. Moreover, Japan's integration of artificial intelligence and robotics in stations and trains adds a layer of convenience, such as automatic announcements and crowd control technologies, countries like South Korea have also embraced modern technology in their public transport systems.<sup>3</sup> Seoul's subway system, for example, offers similar conveniences with

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<sup>1</sup> "Toyokeizai ONLINE" 60% of timetables are on schedule, serious situation of Deutsche Bahn's 'delays'. August 10, 2024.

<sup>2</sup> "Hanacell" Why are there so few railroads in America? Find out why and other transportation options. April 11, 2022.

<sup>3</sup> "KONEST" Thorough comparison of Korean transportation IC cards! August 26, 2024.

integrated mobile apps for navigation and real-time updates.<sup>4</sup> However, developing countries such as Africa still lack sufficient public transportation, and cannot yet catch up with Japan.

Public transportation is said to be an environmentally friendly means of transportation.<sup>5</sup> The CO<sub>2</sub> emitted by railways when transporting one passenger 1 km is one-seventh that of cars and one-fifth that of aviation. Of course, in addition to Japan, many countries around the world are working to reduce the environmental impact of transportation. In Europe, cities such as Copenhagen and Amsterdam are making great strides in promoting bicycles and electric buses as cleaner alternatives to traditional public transport. However, in regions like the United States, where car culture is deeply rooted, the challenge is to transition to more sustainable public transportation systems. Efforts to promote electric buses and sustainable trains are growing, but not as widespread as in Japan.

Finally, the best thing about Japan is that public transportation such as trains and buses are almost always on time.<sup>6</sup> According to the spectator, with six more months of train strikes recently announced it is getting hard to imagine a punctual, anxiety-free railway journey in the UK. Even more, Japan has not had a strike since the 1970s. Furthermore, the reason why Japan's public transportation is on time is related to Japanese culture.<sup>7</sup> According to Frédéric de Kemmeter, Japan has always been a meritocratic society, more individualistic, but with a collective and a very strong respect for it. Conductors, drivers and station staff play an important role in the safe and efficient operation of the railways. An essential aspect of this role is the variety of physical gestures and voice calls they make in the course of their duties. Strict and disciplined staff training plays a big part. All high-speed train drivers are capable of reaching

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<sup>4</sup> “ALG” Land Reform schemes for African railway and road networks. October 02, 2023.

<sup>5</sup> “Nihonmineitetsudoukyoukai” Train Q&A.

<sup>6</sup> “The spectator” Why are Japan’s trains so much better than ours? February 25, 2024

<sup>7</sup> “Mediarail. be-Rail Europe News” Why are Japanese trains so punctual? August 03, 2020.

their destination within five seconds of the scheduled arrival time and stopping the train within one meter of the prescribed stop position.

In conclusion, there are many reasons why Japan's public transportation system is superior to other countries. Of course Japan has some issues, but its transportation is almost perfect. In Japan, the problem is that the number of tourists has increased recently and the prices are getting higher, but the convenience is more than worth it.

## II

My experiences eating in Canada are very different than in Japan.<sup>8</sup> There is a lot of junk food in Canada, it is sold in larger quantities than in Japan.<sup>9</sup> In Canada many students have a school lunch, but in Japan, almost all students have a Bento<sup>10</sup> and Japan has “one soup and three side dishes, but Canada doesn't have these food guidelines. Coming to Canada in this way made me realize the difference between Japanese and Canadian food culture. In this essay, I will detail about these differences.

The difference between Japanese and Canadian food culture that I felt when I first came to Canada is that the sizes of snacks, food, juice, etc. are completely different. Most Japanese snacks are packaged in small bags, but in Canada, most snacks come in large bags containing a large quantity of snacks. I had also heard that juice sizes in Japan and America are completely different<sup>11</sup>, but upon researching, I learned that McDonald's drinks in Canada are larger than in America. When I looked into the reason for the large snack bags in Canada, I found that the reason was to make the snack bags larger so that they would catch the attention of the people

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<sup>8</sup> “How is the food in the U.S. really like? If you are going to study in the U.S., you need to learn the etiquette of eating in the U.S.” April 25, 2024.

<sup>9</sup> “American high school classes and lunch” February 06, 2020.

<sup>10</sup> “Comparison of Japanese and American Family Food Culture”

<sup>11</sup> “Why are chips packets as big as they are? Why not make them smaller?” 2015.

buying them. Given that, I thought that the Japanese package was so elaborately designed that there was no need to increase the size of the bag.

The next time I felt the difference in food culture was the difference in lunch between Canadian and Japanese high schools. I looked around and noticed that quite a few people were buying and eating lunch at the school. Some Japanese high schools have cafeterias and people eat there, but as far as I can tell, only about a quarter of the people eat there. Some Canadian high school students bring their own lunch boxes. However, those lunch boxes are often put in Tupperware, unlike Japanese bentos. When I showed my foreign friends the Japanese bento, they were very impressed, so it was one of the things I realized that the technology of Japanese food culture is amazing.

One of the hallmarks of Japanese food culture is the concept of "ichiju-sansai," which refers to a meal consisting of one soup and three side dishes.<sup>12</sup> However, this is a Japanese only culture, so there is no one soup and three side dishes in Canada. In Canada, we mainly eat from one plate, and also, there are no side dishes like in Japan.<sup>13</sup> Japanese one soup and three side dishes provide well balanced nutrition.<sup>14</sup> I think this balanced diet is also the reason for Japan's high average life expectancy. While there are many manners for eating in Japan, in Canada you can enjoy your meal without being bound by any particular formality. I found that many Canadians of Asian descent eat Asian food because Canada has a large immigrant population, so I learned that there are a number of markets and other places in Canada that cater to people of Asian descent.

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<sup>12</sup> "A thorough explanation of the food situation for studying in Canada!" October 08, 2024.

<sup>13</sup> "What is one soup and three vegetables? A complete summary of the meaning, benefits, menu planning, and cautions." January 12, 2022.

<sup>14</sup> "Life expectancy update" July 31, 2020.

In conclusion, my experience with Canadian food culture highlighted the differences between the two countries' approaches to meals and snacks. We found that they have their own unique ways of packaging snacks, taking lunches at school, and different ways of structuring their meals. In Japan, it is a balanced “one soup and three side dishes”, and in Canada, it is a dish suitable for diverse lifestyles. These are not only the differences in food, but also the differences between the different cultures. I hope that in the future there will be more food culture exchanges around the world. Knowing about Canadian food culture gave me the opportunity to learn more about food culture around the world as well.

### III

Recently, AI continues to develop, and AI technology is used in many aspects of our lives and society. AI has made our lives more convenient. It is being used in many areas, such as education, medicine, business, and entertainment. AI can do things that used to take humans a lot of time and effort. For example, it can translate languages, write emails, drive cars, and even create pictures or music. Many people are excited about how AI can make our lives easier and more efficient. However, no matter how good AI is, there are certain things that only humans can do. In this essay, I will talk about two special human abilities—emotions and empathy and the power to create and make moral decisions.

Firstly, AI can understand language and mimic conversation, but it cannot truly feel. For example, when a friend is sad, we naturally respond with care by reading their expressions, voice tone, and even silence. I believe that this is the uniquely human power of “empathy,” an action that is born not of mere information processing, but of a connection of the heart. According to the study LAB.<sup>15</sup> We sometimes call the type of person who does not show emotion and always

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<sup>15</sup> ”Can AI understand human emotions?” April 14, 2022

makes calm decisions “like a machine,” but as that term symbolizes, a machine does not have feelings, nor does it understand them.<sup>16</sup> The replies that come back from the non-corporeal ChatGPT are always objective. That is, since ChatGPT has not actually experienced various things on its own, it cannot give subjective opinions, such as what it likes about a dish at a restaurant, even when it says it recommends the food at that restaurant. Therefore, Hinagata believes that if AI never has a body, there is little chance of it having feelings.<sup>17</sup> This emotional dimension fuels compassion, creativity, and moral judgment — qualities essential in fields like healthcare, counseling, and the arts.

Next I thought about creativity and moral judgment. AI can make new ideas by using old information, but these ideas come from the past. AI looks at what people did before and tries to copy or mix it. Humans, however, can think of completely new things. We can imagine stories, make art, and ask deep questions. These ideas don’t always come from data. Sometimes, they come from our feelings or dreams. Also, humans can think about what is right and what is wrong. We can make moral choices. For example, we can ask, “Is this fair?” or “Will this hurt someone?” AI can follow rules, but it doesn’t understand feelings or the meaning behind those rules. Humans can think about others and try to be kind. This kind of thinking is something only people can do.

AI is an incredible tool that will continue to play a major role in society. However, recognizing the difference between what AI can do and what only humans can do is crucial in this era. Recently, research and development of AI that recognizes and analyzes emotions from information such as human facial expressions has been progressing. Emotion, empathy, and perhaps it is this “imperfection” that will become the most valuable asset in a future where we

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<sup>16</sup> “Can we give robots emotions?” November 28, 2023

<sup>17</sup> “Human vs. AI: The Battle for Creativity, Intelligence, and the Future” November 11, 2024

coexist with AI. creativity, and moral reasoning—All of these are human because they are “imperfect”. As we move forward into a future with AI, we should not be afraid. Instead, we should focus on becoming more human—not less. By understanding what only we can do, we can build a world where AI supports us, but never replaces it.

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## National Cuisine

### I

Recently, many people have said that British food is not good. Traditional British cuisine includes dishes like fish and chips, roast dinners, and pies, but it is often criticized for being bland. In fact, British food has been ranked among the worst cuisines in the world.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, Italian cuisine was selected as the best in many articles.<sup>2</sup> While 721 Italian restaurants have been awarded Michelin stars, only 60 British restaurants have received this honor.<sup>3</sup> In this essay, I will discuss the features of British food and French food and consider which cuisine is better.

British cuisine is a unique mix of cooking traditions from the United Kingdom, including England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland. It's known for its simple but high-quality dishes made with local ingredients. These dishes are often paired with basic sauces that enhance the flavors instead of covering them up. Over time, British cuisine has changed and incorporated many ingredients and influences from different cultures. For example, the Normans introduced new culinary influences, such as rich sauces and new cooking methods. The Romans introduced sausages, and in the Middle Ages, rice, sugar, oranges, and spices from Asia were added. After 1492, the Columbian Exchange brought beans and potatoes from the Americas, and spicy curry sauces from India also became part of British cooking. English cuisine, which is a major part of British cuisine, has its own unique qualities but shares many similarities with the broader British culinary tradition. This is because of ingredients and cooking ideas that came from places like North America, China, and India during the British Empire, as well as post-war immigration. Traditional English meals include bread and cheese, roasted or stewed meats, meat pies, boiled

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<sup>1</sup> James Henry, "Top 10 Countries with the Worst Food," Tens, 2024

<sup>2</sup> Zoe Li, "10 best cuisine in the world," CNN, 2023

<sup>3</sup> Michelin Guide, 2024

vegetables, and fish. Some famous English dishes are the Bedfordshire clanger, bangers and mash, chicken tikka masala, beef Wellington, and the full English breakfast. The Sunday roast, which includes roast beef, Yorkshire pudding, roast potatoes, and vegetables, is considered a national dish of the UK.<sup>45</sup>

French cuisine is often considered one of the best in the world. It has a long history of creativity and skill, and its diverse ingredients and careful cooking techniques have made it a model of excellence in cooking. French food has been influenced by many different cultures, like Italian, Spanish, and Middle Eastern. During the Renaissance, French cooking changed a lot, focusing on more refined flavors and beautiful presentations. In the 18th century, haute cuisine became popular, which featured complex dishes and fancy sauces. Some of the most important ingredients in French cooking are fresh, seasonal vegetables, fruits, and herbs. Meat, poultry, and seafood are also key ingredients, and they are prepared with a lot of attention to detail. Dairy products, like butter, cream, and cheese, are used often to give food a rich taste. Wine, especially from France, is also a key part of French cooking and dining.<sup>6</sup> French cooking techniques are known for being precise and artistic. Some of the main techniques include sautéing, roasting, braising, and stewing. Making sauces is a big part of French cuisine, and there are many types of sauces, from simple ones made with butter to more complicated ones that take longer to make. Presentation is also very important in French cuisine, and dishes are often served in a way that makes them look like works of art. In recent years, French cuisine has continued to change. Top chefs like Alain Ducasse and Pierre Gagnaire have pushed the limits of traditional French cooking, creating new dishes that mix old and new techniques.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Tilda, "The classics and fusions of the British cuisine," Tilda, 2024

<sup>5</sup> Otter, "What is British cuisine," Otter, 2024

<sup>6</sup> Ecoledocsse, The history of french cuisine, Ecoledocsse, 2023

<sup>7</sup> Escoffier "French Cooking: How and Why French Cuisine Came to Rule the World," Escoffier, 2022

In conclusion, there are several similarities and differences between British cuisine and French cuisine. Both cuisines have developed under the influence of various countries, with British cuisine respecting traditional flavors and bringing out the flavor of the ingredients themselves, while French cuisine emphasizes beautiful, elegant dishes using a variety of techniques. However, I think British cuisine has many more familiar dishes than French cuisine, and especially fish and potatoes and jacket potatoes are easier to eat and bring out the flavor of the ingredients. These dishes should be more highly rated.

## II

Many people often say that British food has no flavor. In fact, when you research British food, the first word that comes up is "bad." This is evidence that Japanese people do not have a very good impression of British food.<sup>8</sup> In this essay, I will compare the pub culture common in Britain with the food at home in Japan, and clarify the differences and similarities in values.

First, we focus on cooking in Japanese homes. Meals in Japan are the foundation of daily life and a place to foster communication. In data released by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, when asked what people pay attention to in their diet, 34.6% of people answered that they eat together as a family, teach their children the joy of eating and manners, and provide food education. There is a ritual where you say itadakimasu (thank you for the meal) when you start eating and gochisousama (thank you for the meal) when you finish. This is probably a Japanese food value that fosters communication within the family and shares food culture. Furthermore, Japanese families also value a sense of the seasons. In general, people eat seasonal foods such as seasonal foods in spring and fish in winter, and it is clear that they try to communicate more through food.<sup>9</sup> In addition, Japan has its own unique way of getting balanced

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<sup>8</sup> Aisling McCrea, "Why british food is terrible," Theoutline, January 22, 2020

<sup>9</sup> Ministry of Agriculture, "Forestry and Fisheries," Traditional Dietary Cultures of the Japanese, 2023

nutrition that is not found in other countries, such as one soup, three side dishes, and eating in a triangle.<sup>10</sup>

Next, we focus on British food values. In the UK, as in Japan, meals are considered to be a time to cherish family time. At dinner, people talk while eating fish and chips and Yorkshire pudding. Also, on special occasions, people eat traditional meals such as Sunday roasts, which is similar to Japan.<sup>11</sup> On the other hand, unlike in Japan, where people tend to eat breakfast together, people often eat alone or without eating.<sup>12</sup> Also, in the UK, people rarely express gratitude for meals like in Japan, which is thought to be due to religious influences. Instead, I have seen Christians pray before eating several times. Another significant difference is that people are free to season their food. In the UK, various condiments are often placed on the table for anything they eat, and ketchup, mayonnaise, vinegar, salt, pepper, etc. are basically placed on the table. Making the food taste the way that each person likes is a priority.<sup>13</sup> In addition, pubs are a unique part of British culture. Pubs are bars that were originally developed in the UK and are short for public houses. They have long been popular as social gatherings where locals can enjoy food and drinks, which are essential to their lives. They are known as places to deepen bonds with friends and family and to meet new people. According to a BBC article, there were about 40,000 hubs as of 2019, meaning that there are more convenience stores per capita in the UK than in Japan.<sup>14</sup>

In conclusion, there are similarities and differences between British and Japanese food values. In both countries, conversations during meals are very essential. The difference is that in

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<sup>10</sup> Live Japan perfect guide, "Gozen and teishoku," Live Japan perfect guide, 12 April 2017

<sup>11</sup> Michelle Martin, "How British Families Are Teaching Kids About Their Roots Through Food," Huffpost, 19 May 2019

<sup>12</sup> Sainsbury, "New research reveals family dinnertime is on the decline with only 28% of households sharing the same meal," Sainsbury, 12 January 2021

<sup>13</sup> Louis Thomas, "Variety is the spice of life: challenging the great myth of spices in British cuisine," eatecollective, no date

<sup>14</sup> BBC, "UK pub number rise for the first time in a decade," BBC, 16 January, 2020

Japan, seasonal dishes are eaten at home, while in Britain, personal taste preferences are valued. Conversely, in Japan, people can be reluctant to change the taste of prepared dishes. In addition, the British have a culture of enjoying afternoon tea, and there are also differences between Japan and Britain in the time they eat dinner. There is a prejudice against British cuisine in Japan, but this may be influenced by the British culture of enjoying food freely.

### III

One of the biggest reasons why many Japanese people do not want to visit the UK is food.<sup>15</sup> Many Japanese people believe that British food is not tasty. This idea has been around for a long time and because of this image, many people in Japan choose to visit other countries instead of the UK. Of course, this is not good for British tourism. Also, Japanese people will lose chances to eat and drink British food. In this essay, I will suggest some ways to help people accept British food more. The first is to increase the opportunities to eat British food through events and restaurants. The second is to change British food to suit Japanese tastes. The third is to advertise British food through SMS.

First, there should be more food events that show British food. In recent years, because of COVID-19, many food and culture events have been canceled or delayed.<sup>16</sup> In the past, however, there were some good events to promote British food. For example, in 2013, there was an event called A Taste of British Food is GREAT. This event was held in Japan. In this event, foodies and media people tried British recipes. The event also wanted to put more British food and drinks in Japanese supermarkets and restaurants. Another goal was to get more Japanese people to visit

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<sup>15</sup> “GREAT campaign aims to improve reputation of British food, Food”, Glorious Food, September 2013

<sup>16</sup> “Industry revenue of “event catering and other food service activities“ in the United Kingdom from 2012 to 2025, Statista”, 2025

different areas of the UK and try real British food.<sup>17</sup> I think these kinds of events should continue in the future to change the bad image of British food.

Second, British food can change a little to match Japanese tastes. British food is already a mix of many cultures. In Japan, people usually do not change the food that is served to them. They think it is rude to add more sauce or spices so if they do not like the original taste, they might not eat it at all. This is one reason why some Japanese people think British food is not good. Therefore, if someone doesn't like green peas in a British breakfast, they can remove them. Also, it is okay to mix British food with Japanese food to make it more popular. Japanese food in the UK has also changed. For instance, some sushi rolls in the UK don't have seaweed because many people don't like it.<sup>18</sup> This kind of flexibility is helpful for cultural exchange.

Third, British food needs better promotion on social media. Instagram and TikTok are popular with teenagers, but people in their 20s to 40s use websites like Cookpad. Cookpad had more than 5 million recipes in 2018, and the number is probably higher now. About 2 million of them are international recipes, but only 98 are British.<sup>19</sup> That means Japanese people don't have many chances to see British recipes. If we increase the number of recipes, or if British food is included in meal kit services like Oisix, more people might try British food at home.

In conclusion, I believe that we can change the bad image of British food in Japan. We should hold more food events, make small changes to the recipes to suit Japanese tastes, and share British food online and through cooking services. These ideas will help more Japanese people discover the good side of British food and enjoy it more often.

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<sup>17</sup> "GREAT campaign aims to improve reputation of British food", Food, Glorious Food, September 2013

<sup>18</sup> "Japanese Food Culture in the UK", The LION, 2024

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<https://www.thelionliverpool.co.uk/a-tour-of-japanese-fermented-foods-at-our-uk-japanese-restaurant/>

Comparison of food culture in the United Kingdom and Japan

I

Nowadays, the popularity of Japanese dishes is expanding around the world, including the United Kingdom. In 2023, there were 2,615 firms in Japanese restaurant industry in the UK,<sup>1</sup> which has made 1.3 billion pounds of revenue.<sup>2</sup> Tazaki foods, which was founded in the UK in 1978, has been making 70 million pounds by operating the UK's first Japanese ingredients brand "Yutaka" since the 1980s.<sup>3</sup> One of the reasons why British people prefer Japanese food is that there are some common features and uniqueness in Japanese food culture compared to British ones. In this essay, I will discuss similarities and differences between Japanese and British dishes in order to understand the cultural diversity of food.

First of all, there are some common things between British and Japanese food culture. For one, there are traditional customs related to tea in both countries, such as afternoon tea and tea-ceremony. In 2019, research showed that more than one in 10 Brits drink tea at least 6 times per day.<sup>4</sup> However, afternoon tea is becoming a special occasion such as celebration or meeting with family and friends.<sup>5</sup> Also, Sado is known as one of traditional Japanese culture. 72.3% of Japanese people drink green tea every day,<sup>6</sup> but in fact, the percentage of people who have participated in the tea ceremony was only 0.8% in 2021.<sup>7</sup> In both countries, although tea is still recognized as traditional culture, the original styles might be disappearing. The second similarity

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<sup>1</sup> IBIS World, "Japanese & Sushi Restaurants in the UK - Number of Businesses," IBIS World, April 2, 2024

<sup>2</sup> IBIS World, "Japanese & Sushi Restaurants - Market Size (2012–2030)," IBIS World, April 2, 2024

<sup>3</sup> Business Reporter, "Feeding the UK's growing taste for Japanese cuisine," Independent, 12 July, 2023

<sup>4</sup> PG tips, "10 charts hot beverages," The Grocer, August 2019

<sup>5</sup> Šnajdar Gudek Tea, "Afternoon Tea Tradition: Everything you should know about it," Culture tourist, November 9, 2021

<sup>6</sup> World Green Tea Association, "Green tea consumption report in Japan," World Green Tea Association, Date unknown

<sup>7</sup> Arba Alexandru, "Participation rate in Japanese tea ceremony (sado) activities in Japan from 1996 to 2021," Statista, September 8, 2023

is the popularity of curry, because chicken tikka masala was actually born in Britain, and curry is loved by British people. As of 2016, there were about 12,000 Indian restaurants in the UK.<sup>8</sup> Also in Japan, there are a lot of Indian curry restaurants. Historically, the British introduced Indian curry to Japan in the late 19th century, after changing its taste to British style.<sup>9</sup> Therefore Japanese people enjoy both Indian curry and Japanese curry today. According to Jinsuke Mizuno, who is a Japanese expert on curry, 10 billion plates of curry are consumed by Japanese people annually.

On the other hand, a lot of differences in food culture can be found between the UK and Japan. Especially on weekends, most British people enjoy brunch, which is a word made by a mixture of breakfast and lunch. This culture was first created in the 19th century for people who want to sleep on Sundays without skipping breakfast.<sup>10</sup> In contrast, nearly 79% of Japanese people usually have breakfast every day.<sup>11</sup> Secondly, there is a large difference in staple food. Most British traditional meals are based on potatoes, for example fish and chips, bangers and mash, and shepherd's pie. Compared to these foods, rice is mainly consumed in Japan. About 93% of Japanese people ate rice at least once a day, according to a survey in November 2023.<sup>12</sup> Also, noodles such as udon and soba are preferred as substitutes of rice.<sup>13</sup>

To conclude, this essay provided similar points and differences between traditional meals in the UK and Japan to find the food culture diversity. Although diet style and typical food are significantly different, one of the traditional cultures in both countries is related to tea, and curry is loved by many people. Food culture is strongly associated with the history and lifestyles,

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<sup>8</sup> Moore Malcolm, "The great British curry crisis," Financial Times, January 8, 2016

<sup>9</sup> Krick James, "The Origins of Japanese Curry," Metropolis Japan, October 20, 2024

<sup>10</sup> Daily ground, "The Rise and Significance of Brunch Culture and What It Represents," Daily ground, March 8

<sup>11</sup> Diep C., "Frequency of eating breakfast in Japan as of November 2023," Statista, May 27, 2024

<sup>12</sup> Diep C., "Frequency of eating rice in Japan as of November 2023," Statista, May 27, 2024

<sup>13</sup> Diep C., "Most popular staple foods eaten as substitutes to rice amid shortages in Japan as of September 2024," Statista, October 16, 2024

therefore it varies in each country. Recently, people eat not only their countries' traditional food, but also enjoy meals in other cultures or mixed culture food. In my opinion, it is important to keep the original style to preserve food diversity. Traditional customs such as afternoon tea and tea ceremony seemed to be gradually disappearing because of changing its style and low participation of modern people. Creating new meals by mixing cultures can widen food diversity, but people should not forget to respect their tradition.

## II

In the United Kingdom, sushi is ranked the third most popular Asian dish following sweet and sour chicken, and Thai green curry.<sup>14</sup> Although a lot of British people were feeling that raw fish was unique a few decades ago, its popularity is growing rapidly. Not only sushi, but also whole Japanese restaurants have recorded a year-over-year growth of 524% in the UK.<sup>15</sup> One of the factors which promote expansion of the Japanese food market in the UK is that there are some similarities between food cultures in the two countries. For example, both countries have traditions related to tea, such as afternoon tea and tea ceremony. However the origin of such traditions seem to be disappearing because of globalisation and mixing cultures. Therefore this essay will discuss the advantages and disadvantages of food cultures in both countries in order to reveal problems that they have, and to think about the solutions to them.

First of all, we can see some benefits in both countries by comparing the features of their food. The UK has advantages in terms of veganism because more vegetarian options are available at many restaurants than in Japan. In 2024, 2.5 million vegans were estimated in the UK accounting for 4.7% of the adult population,<sup>16</sup> while only 2.1% of the Japanese population

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<sup>14</sup> Thompson Hannah, "Asian food booming in UK as sector grows," *The caterer*, February 8, 2016

<sup>15</sup> Maki Ramen, "Urban Fusion: How Japanese Cuisine is Reshaping British Food Culture," *Maki & Ramen*, January 3, 2025

<sup>16</sup> Barber Sophie, "How many vegetarians and vegans are in the UK in 2025?," *Finder*, January 7, 2025

were vegan in 2019.<sup>17</sup> The UK vegan food market is still growing at a rate of 9.58%, leading food diversity in the country.<sup>18</sup> On the other hand, the overall Japanese diet can be healthier than British food as it is rich in nutrients. In a study, 91% of participants who consumed the traditional Japanese diet which contains more fish, soybeans, vegetables, mushrooms, and seaweed for 6 weeks reduced the risk of type 2 diabetes.<sup>19</sup> Although Japan has a history of vegan cuisine called Shojin ryouri, the traditional diets often contain fish, providing good nutrients for human health.

However, in both countries, there are drawbacks of their food cultures. Firstly, British people do not value food and cooking. According to a report commissioned by the government, only 8% of consumer spending goes on food eaten at home in the UK, compared to 14% in Spain and Italy.<sup>20</sup> Moreover, Brits spend 1 hour and 19 minutes on eating per day, while people in Spain, Italy, and France spend more than 2 hours.<sup>21</sup> This is one of the reasons why traditional food cultures seem to be disappearing in the UK, compared with its neighbour countries. When it comes to Japan, traditional meals are mainly composed of rice and miso soup, but they contain too many carbohydrates and too much salt. In fact, a bowl of miso soup contains approximately 25% of the recommended daily amount of sodium for an adult.<sup>22</sup> Also, sushi, which is one of the popular Japanese dishes, is high in carbohydrates.<sup>23</sup> This is because sushi vinegar is prepared by adding a lot of sugar to rice vinegar, then it is added to plain rice.

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<sup>17</sup> Brown Alex, "Vegetarianism and Veganism in Japan – Why Vegan Products...", Tokyo esque, July 13, 2022

<sup>18</sup> Vegconomist, "UK Vegan Food Market Grows 9.58% as 40% of Consumers Demand Plant-Based Options," Vegconomist, March 23, 2023

<sup>19</sup> Department of Food and Nutrition, "Effects of a Japan Diet Intake Program on Metabolic Parameters in Middle-Aged Men: A Pilot Study," National Library of Medicine, June 19, 2016

<sup>20</sup> Dimpleby Henry, "National Food Strategy Part One," National Food Strategy, July 2020

<sup>21</sup> Dimpleby Henry, "National Food Strategy Part One," National Food Strategy, July 2020

<sup>22</sup> Thomas Edward, "5 Reasons Why Japanese Food May Not Be As Healthy As You Think," Medium, May 28, 2022

<sup>23</sup> Thomas Edward, "5 Reasons Why Japanese Food May Not Be As Healthy As You Think," Medium, May 28, 2022

To conclude, in this essay, I discussed the advantages and shortcomings of food cultures in the UK and in Japan in order to consider solutions to their problems. Each feature has some benefits, such as a variety of food options for vegans or an effect on reducing risk of diabetes. On the other hand, both countries also have serious problems related to their food cultures. For instance, British are less likely to place value on food or cooking, and traditional Japanese diets can be unhealthy because of too many carbohydrates and too much salt. To deal with these disadvantages, I think that British people should focus more on their traditional events such as Christmas. Because the UK has Christian roots, the majority of people significantly celebrate Christmas with traditional feasts, including red cabbage and Christmas pudding. If they enjoy such religious events and notice the importance of traditional food, they would recognise their food culture again, then incorporate it into their daily life. Besides, Japanese people have to pay attention to nutritional balance. Although rice is a staple food, if they eat it too much, it will have negative impacts on their body over an advantage of the Japanese diet that it is rich in nutrients. In both countries, it is vital to recognise problems related to their food cultures in order to sustain their traditions.

### III

In UK adults, a mean of 57% of daily energy intake comes from ultra-processed foods (UPFs), that are produced by adding preservatives, sweeteners, colourings and flavourings, according to the National Diet and Nutrition Survey.<sup>24</sup> This means that most Brits do not consider that home cooking is important because they rely on quickly and easily preparable foods that are unhealthy. On the other hand, about 52% of women and 45% of men in Japan prefer cooking meals from scratch to using store-bought products.<sup>25</sup> Having homemade food is better than eating

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<sup>24</sup> Chavez-Ugalde Yanaina, "Ultra-processed food consumption in UK adolescents," medRxiv, June 5, 2023

<sup>25</sup> Nippon.com, "Cooking for One: Japanese Singles Tend to Prefer Ready-Made Options," Nippon.com, January 29, 2025

pre-prepared products because we can decide the ingredients and cut the amount of unnecessary sugar or salt. However, Japanese traditional food has potential drawbacks in regard to balanced diets. In this essay, I will provide issues of British and Japanese food customs and solutions to them in order to find the best way to sustain people's health in the future.

First of all, the UK and Japan seem to have similar problems relating to nutritional diets. Because British people are less likely to put value on home cooking, they depend more on pre-prepared food and ready made meals. According to a survey on Brits' cooking at home, 25% of British people prepare their food at home with pre-prepared components, followed by 18% of those who use ready made meals.<sup>26</sup> Another statistics showed that the UK ready-cooked meal market has grown by more than 7% in 2024 because of the usefulness of storing them in the fridge for future use.<sup>27</sup> Although these types of food help people who do not have enough time to spend on cooking, an increase in the consumption of manufactured food has a huge concern in UK society. In fact, UPFs account for a mean of 57% of UK adults' energy intake as I mentioned before,<sup>28</sup> and a research by the European Journal of Nutrition found that the number is even higher in UK adolescents at 66%.<sup>29</sup> UPFs generally contain high levels of sugar and fat while they lack fiber and protein, such as supermarket bread, breakfast cereal, cakes, and crisps. It means that it has a negative impact on the UK adolescents' development where they need a variety of nutrients. Similarly, traditional Japanese meals contain too much salt and too many carbohydrates as they normally consist of rice, miso soup and tsukemono. Surprisingly, one bowl of miso soup is said to provide approximately 25-30% of the daily recommended salt intake by WHO.<sup>30</sup> Therefore, regularly drinking miso soup may lead to an excess intake of salt.

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<sup>26</sup> Vypr, "How are Brits cooking from home in 2024?," Vypr, November 2023

<sup>27</sup> Shilling Isabelle, "UK Ready Meals Market Report 2024," Mintel, Date unknown

<sup>28</sup> Chavez-Ugalde Yanaina, "Ultra-processed food consumption in UK adolescents," medRxiv, June 5, 2023

<sup>29</sup> University of Cambridge, "Ultra-processed food makes up almost two-thirds of calorie intake of UK adolescents," University of Cambridge, July 17, 2024

<sup>30</sup> Author unknown, "Disadvantages of Japanese food," Why are Japanese healthy?, January 16, 2024

However, in order to tackle the problem of unhealthy diets, the UK government has already introduced some regulations. They provided restrictions on the promotions of foods and drinks that are high in fat, salt or sugar, which are called HFSS.<sup>31</sup> As a result, there was a success in lowering the proportions of pizzas and crisps that were classified as HFSS from 51% to 42%, and 96% to 88%, respectively.<sup>32</sup> Also in Japan, some organisations played roles in salt reduction efforts. For instance, since 2013, the Japanese Society of Hypertension (JSH) has encouraged the food industry to promote low-sodium foods, and it has reduced 9.678 tons of salt in the diet through 10 years.<sup>33</sup> In both countries, even if it is hard and takes a long time to change people's eating habits, intervention by the government or a big organisation is one of the effective solutions to deal with the problem of unbalanced diets.

In summary, to consider how to maintain individuals' health in the future, this essay raised some problems related to food in the UK and Japan, and focused on existing solutions. The fact that British people ingest more than half of their energy from ultra-processed foods means that they take high risk of consuming too much fat, salt or sugar. Likewise, traditional Japanese meals tend to contain excessive salt and carbohydrates from rice, miso soup and tsukemono. In order to address these problems, the UK government and some Japanese organisations have already taken action such as restricting the promotion of HFSS that contain lots of fat, salt and sugar, or supporting firms that produce low-sodium foods. In my opinion, however, these solutions are not enough to significantly change the eating habits of British and Japanese people. This is because the number of UPFs sold in grocery stores and the popularity of traditional Japanese food are still high. I think that the key solution is governments intervention

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<sup>31</sup> Author unknown, "Restricting promotions of products high in fat, sugar or salt by location and by volume price: implementation guidance," Gov.UK, September 29, 2023

<sup>32</sup> Brown Rob, "One year on: Have HFSS rules made any difference?," The Grocer, October 2, 2023

<sup>33</sup> Sidharthan Chinta, "From soy sauce to sodium labels: How Japan is rethinking salt reduction," News Medical Life Sciences, February 18, 2025

in the UPF market. They should not only limit production of unhealthy products, but also encourage businesses to develop nutritionally well balanced UPFs. In that way, people can receive benefits of both timesaving and keeping their health from buying high quality ready meals.

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## Differences Between Japanese and Canadian Education and Students

### I

Canada and Japan are in the top 10 Education ranks. According to the website of "2024 World Population Review", the education rank of Japanese education is seventh, while Canada is fourth. Their education systems are both high quality.<sup>1</sup> Besides, a study of test scores of 470,000 15-year-old students in various countries found that Japan and Canada scored high. Both countries record a literacy rate of at least 90%. Therefore, most people who live there can read and write. The reason why 90% of the people of each country are related to two environmental causes. One of the reasons is that both countries have compulsory education for at least 9 years.<sup>2</sup> Citizens learn basic education and have general knowledge from childhood. In addition, there are few slums and poor people in those countries. Most people can go to school. However, while being educated in Canada, I feel there are obvious differences between the Canadian and Japanese educational methods and systems. In this essay, based on the differences in education methods and student behavior in the two countries, we will investigate why the quality of education in both countries is high and the academic ability of the people is high.

First of all, Canadian schools have various features. For example, the boys and girls learn together at most Canadian schools, also most teachers who graduated from university teach them. Each province and area has defined as a set of skills and classes that students have to learn in each grade. Students get the report card year throughout the school year. The subjects for the

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<sup>1</sup> World Population Review, "Education Rankings by Country 2024," World population review, 2024

<sup>2</sup> Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, "Basic information on the school education system," Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, 2002

next grade will vary based on each student's performance.<sup>3</sup> In addition, the features about Canadian students are also different from Japanese students. Almost all Canadian schools allow the freedom of dress and hair. I feel Canadian students are active in remarks during class.

In Japanese schools also boys and also girls take all the classes together like in Canada. However, some schools choose the style that physical education classes are held separately for boys and girls. Moreover, people must pass the high school entrance exam if they wish to go to high school. Also, unlike most Canadian schools, Japanese high schools require students to take classes in subjects determined by the school during their first year of high school, but from the second year, students can choose to take either arts or science classes.<sup>4</sup> In addition, most schools determine the rule of dress and hair, also students must wear a specified uniform.

The two countries have much in common, especially the quality of education provided by their teachers, which is excellent in both cases. Moreover, students from the two countries can learn various subjects. The reason is that they installed high quality maintenance and facilities. Additionally, both education systems are in place. Also, in both countries, all children can have equal access to education. These points relate to the reason that Japanese and Canadian education ranks are higher than some countries. According to the OECD survey the quality of teachers is remarkably related to educational success.<sup>5</sup> Most of the countries that focus on education have innovative approaches to learning methods and recruitment of high quality teachers. In addition, both country's governments focus on education. Government support is important for improving the quality of education. All of these commonalities apply to almost all countries at the top of the educational rankings. Therefore, it is clear that efforts should be made to improve these points in order to improve the quality of education in developing countries. Therefore, I think that

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<sup>3</sup> Government of Canada, "Education in Canada: Life in Canadian schools," Canada.ca, 2022

<sup>4</sup> Mynavi Corporation, "Liberal arts selection," shingaku mynavi, 2023

<sup>5</sup> OECD, "Teachers Matter: Attracting, Developing and Retaining Effective Teachers," OECDilibrary, 2006

countries that have high-quality education, for example, Japan and Canada, should help developing countries develop their educational capacity.

## II

Japanese and Canadian education methods have some similarities and different features. Both education quality is higher than in some countries. The Japanese education method is strict and all students' abilities can be stretched evenly. However, the method is said to be related to a lack of student autonomy. Additionally, the Canadian education method concerns individual diversity, but there are individual differences in the abilities of students. Besides, there are some shortcomings and areas to be improved. For example, the education environment and annual changes in average academic ability. The ideal education for students and teachers can be determined by the advantages and disadvantages of both countries' education systems. In this essay, the perfect education is written based on the results derived from the advantages and disadvantages of Japanese and Canadian education.

According to the Programme for International Student Assessment from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development,” Japanese students were recorded at the top level worldwide.<sup>6</sup> In particular, chemical and mathematical literacy is 4th out of 30 countries, and the Japanese students' reading comprehension skills were ranked 11th out of 30. Additionally, Japanese moral education is valued by many countries.<sup>7</sup> The reason is that the Japanese government rules to do moral classes once a week while compulsory education. This attempt is unusual even in developed countries. In Canada, moral education rarely exists as a separate subject, and Japanese students use textbooks when studying morals. In this way, it is a good thing that Japan is more proactive in moral education than other countries.

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<sup>6</sup> National Institute for Educational Policy Research, “PISA 2018 Results Overview,” National Institute for Educational Policy Research, 2018

<sup>7</sup> The University of Tokyo, “道徳教育における情報化の可能性,” The University of Tokyo, 2006

However, Japanese education has some drawbacks, for example, the working environment for teachers is not good. The reason is that the teachers usually work too long. The length of working hours is the longest in developed countries, they work 60 hours a week. The time spent working during one day is 12 hours. This fact is connected to a decline in the quality of teaching. The cause of the problem is the heavy workload for teachers. They should have to do work such as supervising club activities and doing clerical work. It is a serious problem for schools. The next drawback is the foreign language education in Japan. According to the survey from the EF English Proficiency Index, it is reported that English proficiency in Japan is low compared to other countries.<sup>8</sup> In the 2024 exam, Japan ranked 92th out of 116 countries. Language education falls behind compared to other language education methods in Japan emphasizing grammar and measures of exams.

Canadian education also has some benefits and drawbacks. In particular, language education in Canada is at a high level. The reason is that the official languages are English and French, so most Canadian people get the opportunity to study two languages. Furthermore, the government was determined to provide educational opportunities in English and French.<sup>9</sup> So, the students can study their native language. In addition, speaking two languages or more is related to a good career. The second benefit is a wealth of study options for students. Canadian high school students can choose a variety of classes, for example, art, music, theatre, computer science, business, psychology, environmental science, and so on. So they decided on their dream or purpose for the future. It has good effects for students.

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<sup>8</sup> Beppu Gakuin University, “教育と社会—学校教育の役割と課題,” Beppu Gakuin University, 2005

<sup>9</sup> Canadian Parents for French, “About Us,” Canadian Parents for French, 2025

Canadian education faces the problem of a teacher shortage. This is a serious issue that needs to be solved, especially in rural areas. The number of qualified teachers decreases year after year. In addition, this problem affects the quality of the class. So, the students can not take high-quality classes, and more, according to a new survey, 80% of teachers have a huge amount of work. 73% of teachers work more than 45 hours a week, and 35% of teachers work more than 48 hours.<sup>10</sup> The Canadian government needs to take countermeasures quickly.

Canada and Japan have common issues. In particular, both countries have to take countermeasures for the work environment. One of the solutions, increasing the teachers' salaries may be connected to the economic stress-free or More people want to become teachers. Additionally, the second solution is to allow the office staff and support staff to focus more on teaching, leaving non-classroom related tasks and work to the office staff. Such measures would improve the quality of teaching more than it is now, so Canada and Japan should improve the working environment for teachers first and foremost.

### III

I wrote about the differences between Japanese and Canadian education methods, as well as the good points and bad points of both countries' education. For example, Japanese education has the drawbacks that many Japanese teachers need to focus on work for very long periods.<sup>11</sup> In addition, Japanese teachers have many tasks that require preparation for class, so many teachers lose time in their lives. Furthermore, Japanese education also has the problem of low enrollment of foreign language study, as well as Canada is also facing a similar issue regarding teacher working hours and issues regarding teacher quality. In this essay, I will write about the solution to these issues and discuss the ideal Education methods.

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<sup>10</sup> Canadian Teachers' Federation, "Parachute Survey Finds Canadian Education," Canadian Teachers' Federation, 2025

<sup>11</sup> "Japan Highlights from TALIS 2018." OECD. June 19, 2019.

First, regarding the issue of long working hours for Japanese teachers and the solution to this problem. In most schools in Japan, teachers join club activities.<sup>12</sup> This problem is related to the decrease in the number of people who hope to become teachers. One solution to this problem is to stop entrusting teachers with extracurricular activities and other non-classroom duties. For example, the burden on teachers can be reduced by hiring non-teacher personnel as coaches for club activities. This solution can decrease the burden on teachers.

Next, the solution to Canadian education issues. Canada has the issue that the quality of teachers is declining. In fact, this problem is also related to the declining number of teachers. In addition, a decrease in the difficulty of teacher certification is also the cause of this problem.<sup>13</sup> The solution to this problem is to focus on human resource development. The university especially needs to focus on human resource development. Furthermore, another good idea would be to raise teachers' salaries. The quality of teachers is related to the quality of education. Therefore, Canada must take measures for this problem.

Both countries have each other's problems, but similar countermeasures are solutions for both countries' educational issues. In addition, both countries must work to resolve the issue as soon as possible. I will talk about the ideal teaching method based on what I have written. One of the things that an ideal education should have is making a good working environment for teachers. Canada and Japan are worried about a bad working environment for teachers, Furthermore, many other countries have this problem as well.

This is a global issue of education. Resolving this issue has a major relation to improving the educational environment. In addition, improving teachers' working conditions can also solve the teacher shortage problem. The reasons for the decrease in the number of people who hope to

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<sup>12</sup> "Work Style Reform for Teachers." Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT).

<sup>13</sup> "Teacher Shortage Has Staff Across Canada Working 'in Survival Mode'." Global News. February 14, 2023.

become teachers are low salaries, too long working hours and hard work.<sup>14</sup> Many people who would like to be teachers worry about these problems. The second idea that an ideal education should have is to raise teachers' salaries. According to an article, in Japan, teachers working in public schools are not paid even if they work overtime.<sup>15</sup> This problem is also closely related to the decline in the number of people aspiring to become teachers. Many teachers have to work overtime because they have a lot of work to do outside of teaching. This can cause stress for teachers, and some teachers may even experience poor mental health due to this issue. To solve such problems, teachers' salaries should be increased and they should be given overtime pay. By taking such measures, both Japan and Canada can improve the quality of their educational environments. Improving the quality of education will have a positive impact on the future of both countries, so it is very important to take measures like this to create an ideal educational environment.

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<sup>14</sup> "Reasons for Decline in Aspiring Teachers: Most Students Cite Harsh Working Conditions." *Kyoiku Shimbun*. April 12, 2022.

<sup>15</sup> "Japan's Top Court Nixes Public School Teacher's \$17,800 Demand for Unpaid Overtime." *The Japan Times*.

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## Diversity = ?

### I

The Japanese Approach: Diversity = Women's Participation, and Hayato Yazawa.<sup>1</sup>

Recently, there has been a lot of education and discussion about diversity in various places.<sup>2</sup> Meaning that diversity has become much more important than before. For example, in offices, schools, and communities. However, attitudes and measures toward diversity are quite different from country to country.<sup>3</sup> In Japan, where we live, diversity is increasingly accepted. However, it is only partially recognized. In the “2022 Global Gender Gap Report” published by the World Economic Forum, Japan ranked 116th out of 146 countries.<sup>4</sup> The lack of women's participation in the economy and politics was particularly striking. As a result, diversity tends to be thought of as the equalization of men and women, and LGBTQ+ and same-sex marriage are not yet recognized in Japan. On the other hand, Finland, the happiest country in the world, was ranked second in the 2022 Global Gender Gap Report published by the World Economic Forum.<sup>5</sup> Women's participation in society is of course supported there. In addition, the country has taken various other measures, such as recognizing same-sex marriage and enacting anti-discrimination laws to protect LGBT people. As a result, many people live freely and individually as one person.

There are several reasons for Japan's low diversity. The most important of these is the employment system of Japanese companies. The employment system in many Japanese companies tended to emphasize lifetime employment, seniority, and group systems.<sup>6</sup> As a result, many men joined a company, worked in a group, and continued to work for the same company

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<sup>1</sup> Hayato Yasuzawa, “Reviewing the cultural, economic and legal state of Diversity & Inclusion in Japan”, 2021

<sup>2</sup> Hanna Otani, “Teaching Diversity in Japan”, 2021

<sup>3</sup> Unknown, “What Does Diversity Really Mean Around the World?”, 2024

<sup>4</sup> World Economic Forum, “Global gender gap narrowing, but still far away to reach parity”, 2022

<sup>5</sup> World Economic Forum, “Global gender gap narrowing, but still far away to reach parity”, 2022

<sup>6</sup> Unknown, “The difference between Japanese and Foreign companies”, 2023

for decades until retirement as long as they remained healthy. This employment system persisted because of seniority, and with each passing year, careers progressed and salaries improved. And society repeated this system for many years. In addition, many women were not allowed to work in Japan at that time because of the old notion that women's work was housework.<sup>7</sup> Even if they did work, they were paid much less than men.<sup>8</sup> However, in Japan, the Western concept of diversity was introduced in the 1990s, and foreign-affiliated companies that entered the Japanese market during the bubble period, as well as Japanese companies that expanded overseas, introduced this concept. With its introduction, several Japanese companies began to emphasize “individuality,” a characteristic of foreign-affiliated firms, so that everyone could advance in their careers.<sup>9</sup> The number of working women continues to increase every year.<sup>10</sup> In addition, more and more Japanese are changing jobs and finding employment in foreign-affiliated companies in order to advance their careers.<sup>11</sup> However, Japanese companies' approach to diversity has always been geared toward the advancement of women and often does not focus on LGBTQ+.

Next, we look at corporate commitment to diversity in Finland and Japan. In Japanese companies, the focus is mainly on women's participation, and companies provide a variety of support for female workers. For example, longer parental leave and work-from-home programs. As a result, the number of female workers between the ages of 30 and 34 in Japan increased from 60% in 2006 to 80% in 2023.<sup>12</sup> However, LGBTQ+ initiatives are still low. According to a Deloitte survey, the percentage of those who say their employer demonstrates a commitment to

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<sup>7</sup> Toshihide Sakuragi, “Gender differences in housework and childcare among Japanese workers during the COVID-19 pandemic”, 2022

<sup>8</sup> Kazuho Yamaguti, “JAPAN’S GENDER GAP”, 2019

<sup>9</sup> AustZ, “Why it can be easier to start your career in Japan than overseas”, 2021

<sup>10</sup> Mary C Brinton, “Unlocking the potential of Japan’s female workforce”, 2024

<sup>11</sup> Statista, “Number of people employed at foreign affiliates in Japan from fiscal year 2012 to 2019, type of industry”, 2021

<sup>12</sup> Mary C Brinton, “Unlocking the potential of Japan’s female workforce”, 2024

LGBT+ inclusion is 5% for Japanese companies versus 35% for foreign companies.

Furthermore, Japanese companies were 90% more likely to say that they do not demonstrate a commitment to LGBTQ+ employees.<sup>13</sup> In contrast, in Finland, there is no discrimination against LGBTQ+ employees, not to mention equal employment opportunities for men and women. This is because in 2004, a non-discrimination law was enacted that criminalizes direct and indirect discrimination/harassment on the basis of sexual orientation and other grounds. Subsequently, the Gender Equality Act became law and includes protecting individuals from discrimination when they undergo gender confirmation surgery. Also in 2014, new laws were passed to provide greater protection in areas such as employment, education, and health.<sup>14</sup> These laws have created an international labor community in Finland, with many people from all over the world working in the country. In addition, to foster an inclusive work environment, Finnish companies have implemented a variety of strategies, including language training programs, cultural awareness workshops, mentoring initiatives, and diversity hiring practices.<sup>15</sup> By building bridges between local and international employees, organizations are building cohesive teams that benefit from a wealth of skills and perspectives.

For these reasons, society as a whole should be committed to diversity. To this end, laws should be created and education should be provided. Currently, Japanese law has laws against discrimination against persons with disabilities, against gender discrimination, and against the way women are employed, but there is no law against the LGBTQ+ community.<sup>16</sup> As a result, they are discriminated against in many situations and find it difficult to come out.<sup>17</sup> In order to make it easier for everyone to live and be understood as they are, the Japanese government must

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<sup>13</sup> Kenichi Kimura, "A Research by Deloitte: 90% of Japanese respondents say their employers don't demonstrate commitment to LGBTQ+ inclusion", 2023

<sup>14</sup> Unknown, "Local Diversity and Inclusion Spotlight: Finland", 2024

<sup>15</sup> Admin, "Embracing diversity: The International Workforce in Finland", 2024

<sup>16</sup> Hayato Yasuzawa, "Reviewing the cultural, economic and legal state of Diversity & Inclusion in Japan", 2021

<sup>17</sup> Josh Ocampo, "In Japan, an Uncertain Future for L.G.B.T.Q. Rights", 2023

create an anti-discrimination law for the LGBTQ+ community. In addition, many people, from children to adults, need to think about diversity and understand that diversity does not only mean gender equality, but also includes LGBTQ+ people. Therefore, education should be provided in schools from a young age, and companies should actively educate and engage their employees about LGBTQ+. I hope that these efforts will take place and create a society that is livable for all.

## II

“It’s time for a new way of thinking.” said Rodin J. Ely and Davis A. Thomas.<sup>18</sup> Diversity is now respected in many places around the world. When we say diversity, we mean many different kinds of diversity. For example, LGBTQ+, universal design, gender, etc. As a result, many people are living freely and making the most of their individuality. However, diversity is still not respected in all countries. This is a very serious state of affairs. Among diversity, let us focus on gender. Looking at the percentage of board meetings held by women, France has the highest figure at 44%. Next are the United Kingdom and Italy, with the same figure of 39.8%. Japan, at 12.5%, is considerably lower than the other three countries. Furthermore, the United Arab Emirates has the lowest figure in the graph, at 6.3%.<sup>19</sup> From these figures, it can be seen that women's participation is active in Europe. However, diversity is not yet widespread in Asia and Africa. It shows that there are disparities in the status of women in different countries. From these facts, I will give advantages and disadvantages and explain why diversity is important for us.

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<sup>18</sup> Rodin J. Ely and Davis A. Thomas. “Getting Serious About Diversity: Enough Already with the Business Case.” Harvard Business Review. 2020

<sup>19</sup> BoardEx. “Global Gender Diversity 2022.” Altrata. 2022

First, respect for diversity in the workplace allows for creative and innovative thinking. By developing this type of thinking, problems and issues can be viewed from different perspectives, and appropriate approaches to them can be found and resolved<sup>20</sup>. This allows consumers to receive more personalized and higher quality service. In addition, by strengthening relationships with customers, companies can increase productivity and improve market growth.<sup>21</sup> Furthermore, they will be able to compete with a variety of firms not only in their domestic activities, but also on a global level. They can also attract and retain top talent.<sup>22</sup> In the job search process, Generation Z will focus on whether companies recognize diversity as an aspiration. The percentage is very high, at 77%. Therefore, companies need to see diversity in their workforce.<sup>23</sup> It also makes for a healthier company because it respects each and every employee and increases their satisfaction and happiness.<sup>24</sup>

Next, the challenge is in the difficulty of transition. Each has a different culture, religion, and customs, which may sometimes lead to mis-speaking and cause conflicts and tensions. In addition, since they may speak different languages, there is a possibility of misunderstandings, so adequate communication is necessary. Furthermore, companies must consider how employees will communicate with each other and how they will deepen their relationships. And it will take a great deal of time to make these changes take root. It is impossible to make changes quickly.<sup>25</sup> Therefore, it is necessary to make slow and steady changes one by one without giving up.

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<sup>20</sup> Katie Reynolds. "13 benefits and challenges of cultural diversity in the workplace." HULT. 2019

<sup>21</sup> Lisa-Maria Höber. "DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT: PROS, CONS & AN EASY 10-STEPS GUIDE." Temazing. 2024

<sup>22</sup> Lynne Fitzpatrick. "Diversity – Pros and Cons and Failures and Successes." George Lee Sye. 2023

<sup>23</sup> Ayesha Noor. "20+ Gen Z Statistics For Employers." Qureos. 2024

<sup>24</sup> Lisa-Maria Höber. "DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT: PROS, CONS & AN EASY 10-STEPS GUIDE." Temazing. 2024

<sup>25</sup> Danny Stefanic. "Exploring Diversity Training Advantages and Disadvantages." Hyperspace. Unknown

What companies need to do to create a diverse workplace is to create opportunities for communication.<sup>26</sup> Apple is one company that has succeeded in creating a diverse workplace. They have succeeded because they have established regular meetings, communities, and information stations where people can communicate with each other and build trusting relationships. They were also able to care for each other and respect each other's individual cultures. Because of this, Apple has continued to create an environment where staff of various races and genders can work together and make the most of each person's individuality. The company intends to continue to strengthen its inclusive hiring and training practices.<sup>27</sup> It will take a lot of time, but it is possible to create a diverse workplace throughout the company.

These factors make it important for society to respect diversity. By identifying, solving, and improving issues and problems from all perspectives, we can provide higher quality services not only to businesses, but also to consumers. They will also be able to make our lives even richer than they are now. However, the transition will be quite difficult and require a significant amount of time and cost. Because different countries have different languages, cultures, religions, customs, and values. At times, it may lead to misuse of language and cause conflicts and tensions, but companies need to create many opportunities for employees to communicate with each other and create trusting relationships. By creating such a company, moreover, many people will be able to utilize their individual personalities and play an active role in various situations. By doing so, we will be able to create a society where people recognize each other and respect diversity. I hope that we can create an environment where diversity is respected.

### III

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<sup>26</sup> "I belong to @apple." Apple. 2024

<sup>27</sup> Danny Stefanic. "Exploring Diversity Training Advantages and Disadvantages." Hyperspace. Unknown

“DEI is a lightning rod for controversy – but the practice isn't dead” said Tatiana Walk-Morries.<sup>28</sup> Have you heard of DEI? It is a term that stands for diversity, equity, and inclusion. It refers to efforts to create inclusive organizations and societies that respect diversity and equity and are inclusive of all.<sup>29</sup> The promotion of DEI has become a growing priority over the past several decades, especially in recent years in industries including healthcare and higher education. In the U.S., the number of DEI-related positions has increased by 60%, and 86% of large financial firms surveyed expressed a desire to increase their investment in DEI training. Additionally, in 2021, the U.S. spent approximately \$3.8 billion on DEI-related training, accounting for 45.5% of total global spending on DEI.<sup>30</sup> For example, U.S. companies promoting DEI include Coca-Cola, Amazon, and Santander Bank. Promotion can also be seen among Japanese companies. For example, Panasonic, Fujitsu Limited, and Eisai Co. But why is DEI being promoted by so many companies? Today, I will explain its advantages and disadvantages.

On the one hand, creating More Inclusive Spaces. DEI's efforts were also directed toward creating an environment where all people felt “seen” and “heard.” For many, the program helped build a more inclusive culture where people from different backgrounds felt welcome. Employees were encouraged to bring themselves to the workplace.<sup>31</sup> As an example, let's look at Panasonic in Japan. Panasonic has embraced and promoted DEI since 2021 and still has various policies in place regarding DEI.<sup>32</sup> This company currently has overseas operations in more than 60 countries, including India, Vietnam, and South Korea.<sup>33</sup> It implements its DEI initiatives in a manner appropriate to the culture and customs of that country or countries. Therefore, policies

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<sup>28</sup> Tatiana Walk-Morries, “DEI is a lightning rod for controversy – but the practice isn't dead”, BBC, 2024

<sup>29</sup> Lisa Dunn, “What Is Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI)?”, InclusionHub, 2020

<sup>30</sup> Tatiana Walk-Morries, “DEI is a lightning rod for controversy – but the practice isn't dead”, BBC, 2024

<sup>31</sup> Christian, “The Pros and Cons of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) and Why Its End Under the Trump Administration May Not Be As Devastating As People Think”, modpun, 2025

<sup>32</sup> Panasonic, “History of promoting diversity”, Panasonic Group, 2023

<sup>33</sup> Panasonic, “Panasonic’s overseas electrical equipment business operates in over 60 countries”, Housing Tribune Online, 2025

differ from country to country. For example, in India, an internal “Face Off” event is held every year to create an environment where employees can say what they need to say. At the event, employees gather together beyond the boundaries of their work teams to exchange opinions on a single topic in a debate format. Other initiatives include efforts and production tailored to each individual's work balance and work style.<sup>34</sup> As a result of these efforts, the question “Are you respected as an individual?” In DEI-related employee attitude surveys has increased to 70% in 2019 and 78% in 2021.<sup>35</sup> These DEI initiatives can create a place where people can work regardless of race, gender, or age.

On the other hand, there's no proof that DEI works. Some believe the DEI initiative unfairly disadvantages white employees and men in particular. In an effort to diversify their workplaces and campuses, many institutions began to recruit and accept individuals based on demographic characteristics such as race, gender, and sexual orientation rather than purely on merit. As a result, many people felt that their efforts, talents, and qualifications were being overlooked in order to achieve their diversity goals. In a merit-based society, many argue that the best candidate, regardless of background, should always be selected for the job.<sup>36</sup> There are also disadvantages, namely the suppression of free speech and political correctness. DEI programs often stressed the importance of inclusive language and behavior, and while these intentions were generally positive, they sometimes led to an environment where people felt unable to express their opinions freely. This is especially true in educational settings. In the educational environment, both students and teachers feared being reprimanded for expressing views that were inconsistent with the latest progressive ideology; enforcement of the DEI language and

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<sup>34</sup> Panasonic, “Global Regional Initiatives”, Panasonic Group, 2023

<sup>35</sup> Katsuyuki Oowara, “Panasonic's DEI initiative as a "pillar of transformation" -- Dealing with gender gaps and LGBTQ issues”, CNET Japan, 2022

<sup>36</sup> Cultur54\_wp, “The Most Common Arguments Against DEI and How to Respond”, CULTURE PLUS, 2025

code of conduct was seen as a violation of personal freedom and freedom of expression.<sup>37</sup>

Because of these disadvantages, the Trump administration terminated the DEI, believing that it had more disadvantages than advantages.<sup>38</sup> As a result, American companies such as Amazon and Google no longer engage in DEI.

Overall, DEI has several advantages and disadvantages. For example, incorporating the initiative into a company can create an inclusive space. However, there are also disadvantages, such as unwitting reverse discrimination and the suppression of free speech on the grounds of political correctness. I believe that we should continue to promote the DEI initiative because of these things. This initiative has helped people of color find a place in society where they can play an active role. In addition, it can create a good opportunity to incorporate opinions and ideas that have never existed before by thinking from different perspectives due to differences in culture, customs, and religion. Therefore, we will be able to create products that suit a wide range of people and bring joy to many consumers and it can grow the economy. However, it is not a good idea to get too caught up in the DEI initiative and focus only on one race or the other. So we need to change the environment slowly, one by one, rather than abruptly. Also, we should listen to each other's opinions, respect each other's opinions, and discuss and implement them. I hope that our society will become one in which more people can play an active role.

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<sup>37</sup> Christian, "The Pros and Cons of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) and Why Its End Under the Trump Administration May Not Be As Devastating As People Think", modpun, 2025

<sup>38</sup> Trump, "Fact Sheet: President Donald J. Trump Removes DEI From the Foreign Service", The white house, 2025

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## Differences between life in Canada and life in Japan

### I

These days, the number of foreign people living in Japan is increasing. According to Immigration Services Agency, over 3.58 million foreigners including America, Brazil, China and so on are living in Japan. This figure is the highest ever.<sup>1</sup> They have to get licenses that are needed for living in Japan. Permanent residents are the largest among foreigners. Other people have purposes for studying abroad, international work and staying with their family. On the other hand, there are many Japanese people who move to other countries to study abroad, to live and work. America, Australia and Canada are examples of countries where Japanese people are living. Especially Canada, which is known for having many immigrants living there, so this country is comfortable for many people to live in . Also Canada accepts more immigration than Japan. In this essay, I will compare and contrast the differences of life between Canada and Japan focusing on the diversity and cost of living.

Canada is famous for diversity but Japan is not famous. Diversity includes race, gender, age and the others. According to the World Population Review, 196 languages are spoken in Canada.<sup>2</sup> This means many ethnicities are living in Canada. English and French are mainly spoken because the wars were held in the 17th century between the French and British for colonies . Cities such as Quebec's first language is French, because of its history as a colony. In 1988, the Canadian Multiculturalism Act was introduced. Also Canada has more thinking about gender than Japan. LGBTQ problems are examples of gender and preference. In Japan, many people think LGBTQ is not normal so people who have LGBTQ problems is difficult to talk to

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<sup>1</sup> "Number of foreign residents as of the end of June 6, Reiwa 6." Immigration Services Agency. October 18, 2024.

<sup>2</sup> "What Languages do People Speak in Canada?" World Population Review. 2024.

friends, family and others. There are also problems about marriage. In Canada, marriage between people who are of the same gender is low. However Japan doesn't allow it so some people think Japan is difficult to live in. Canada became a diverse country by accepting immigration.

There are big differences in the cost of living. Japan is better than Canada in cost of living. The average monthly wage in Japan is over 0.31 million yen in 2023 and this increased 2.1% from last year.<sup>3</sup> But this figure is still cheap. Canada's average monthly wage is 1.05 million yen. The cost of living for one person in Japan is cheaper than in Canada. In Japan, one person costs 128 thousand yen but in Canada it is 229 thousand yen.<sup>4</sup> Also Japan's rent for one person and family rent is cheaper than Canada by about half the price. But Canada's transport expenses are lower than Japan. The salary in Canada is higher than in Japan but there is a big economic gap in Canada. According to the article of Statistics Canada, the number of homeless people who had experiences of homelessness in Canada is 1.69 million people.<sup>5</sup> Economical problems like high costs and inflation affect people's worries. This is the cause that leads to homelessness.

In conclusion, Canada and Japan have different problems and also positive points. Both country's problems are serious. Canada is better than Japan in terms of diversity but Japan is better than Canada in terms of cost of living. I think Japan should be a more positive country of diversity. Especially resolving gender problems. By foreign people who live in Japan increase, they may affect Japanese people different thinking of diversity. In Canada, the government should think about homeless people because we can not control rising prices. If the rising costs are higher, many people living in Canada may be homeless. I think the government should hire

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<sup>3</sup> "Average wage in 2023, 318,300 yen per month, growth rate for the first time in 29 years." Nihon Keizai Shimbun. January 24, 2024.

<sup>4</sup> Livingcost. "Canada vs Japan - Cost of Living Comparison." LivingCost.org. October 10, 2024.

<sup>5</sup> "Homelessness: How does it happen?" Statistics Canada. December 6, 2023.

homeless people as workers for the Canadian economy. By doing so, workers increase and work efficiency will increase. Also the economy will improve.

## II

Many students all over the world have many tests, lessons and homeworks. They are searching for the best way of study. According to the Faseb Journal, 97% of students prefer to study alone compared to 30% of respondents who prefer to study in a group.<sup>6</sup> Many students think studying alone can focus on your learning. But there are many students who think studying with groups is better. Depending on how you study, your motivation will be changed and your grade will rise or fall. So it is important for you to find how to study and which is good alone or in groups. This essay will discuss the differences between study alone and study with a group focusing on both benefits.

To study alone makes fewer distractions.<sup>7</sup> Because you are not disturbed by anyone so you can keep your pace. When you study with your friends or classmates, it is difficult for you not to talk during study. So if you may talk with people about unimportant things, it is bad for you. Based on the site of Oxford learning, with self-study, students can place 100% of their attention on what they have to learn for the test.<sup>8</sup> Also you can control your study environment, schedule and study materials. Some people like to study at the library, school and own a house. They also like to study beginning in the morning, afternoon or night. When you study alone, you can choose whenever you want, wherever you want, and how long you want to study. You are allowed to study with music and study whatever you want while studying alone. It means you study and relax. You will find it difficult to feel stress.

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<sup>6</sup> Narayana Kilarakaje, Heba Al-Hussaini, Rajunor Ettarh, "Millennial Students Study Alone Using Mixed Educational Resources", The Faseb Journal, April 1, 2019.

<sup>7</sup> Roshel Waite, "Pros and Cons of Studying Alone: Is It Right for You?", Roshel in a Rush Logo, December 22, 2023.

<sup>8</sup> "Studying In Groups Vs. Studying Alone: Which Is Better?", Oxford learning, November 26, 2018.

In group study, someone helps with any questions and shares the ideas. If you can not understand the question and answer, you can ask the people around you and understand more deeply. There is an opportunity not only to hear answers and share the ideas, but also to exchange ideas and opinions. Especially discussion in your class. When you don't understand, having no one around to help can be very frustrating. Junior high school and high school students feel stress about study, grades and future. According to koukousei shinbun in 2023, 82% of high school students feel stress about study. 61% of students also stress about the future.<sup>9</sup> When you and your friends are feeling stressed, studying together can help reduce stress and provide a little relief. So studying with others is important. If someone likes to study with others, studying with a group makes them motivated to study. Because you can encourage people and also others encourage you when you are in a very difficult situation. It helps you relax from some pressure. Also by the competitive spirit and peer pressure, it makes you stay focused. This is useful when you prepare for the difficult exams or doing complex assignments.

In conclusion, studying alone has some benefits like that you can make fewer distractions and can control yourself. I hope controlling yourself is very important in all things. Also group study can help each other and motivate us to study. Both of them have benefits so you can choose whichever you prefer. But I think you should choose which one is better by your condition. When you really want to focus on your studies like before the exams, studying alone can be a better choice. If you feel stressed about studying, it is good for you to study with friends. Friends may help you when you are confused. You should decide how to study. Your decision will be the best way.

### III

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<sup>9</sup> Nao Sasaki, "90% of students are stressed about high school life, with the main factors being "studies, grades, and career paths," as well as methods for resolving the stress.", Koukouseishinbun online, August 16, 2023.

These days the demand for English is becoming higher and higher in Japan because globalization is spreading. There are many high school students who have experience of studying abroad and also want to go to study abroad to learn English. According to the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, the number of Japanese high school students studying abroad is 35 thousand as of February, 2025.<sup>10</sup> Some people have different purposes like language, special skills, and working. Studying abroad has some good points and bad points such as money problems, relation of people and culture shock. This essay will discuss the pros and cons of studying abroad in high school focusing on language study abroad.

Studying abroad is a good point that you can improve your language skills. In Japan, we do not have enough time to speak only English all day long. So the environment of English speaking that means that there are other language speakers than us is good for you to communicate in English fluently. Going to study abroad when you are young is useful to get some knowledge and experiences until you will be an adult. If you can speak any other languages besides your language, it may be useful in the future. On the one hand, you can learn about cultural experiences. For example if you stay with a local family, you will eat different types of dishes for you and also you may have culture shock. There are a lot of differences between high school between Japan and other countries. So studying abroad in high school gives us precious experiences such as languages, cultures, values, and you can make new friends from all over the world. After you experience studying abroad, you can give people a different perspective of the world.

Many people think studying abroad costs a lot of money. This is one of the bad points. The cost of studying abroad includes travel, tuition, living, housing and insurance fees. These

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<sup>10</sup> Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology-Japan. "Surveys and research on international student exchange, international exchange, etc. for high school students, etc." July, 2012.

fees are paid by parents. Some students do the part time job to earn money but it is not enough to study abroad. So they need to think about the cost to their parents. Some parents start saving money for their kid's education like university. The percentage of Japanese high school students going on to university in 2024 was 59.1 percent.<sup>11</sup> University is not cheap to enter. If kids want to study abroad, parents may have to pay from money that is saved for their university fee or other things. It may be a financial cost for some parents. Without a familiar support network is also a negative point. If something goes wrong such as losing wallets, getting lost, and having an accident, it is anxiety for high school students. As students who do not have much experience to be independent from their parents, even a few issues make them stressed. There were some accidents that actually happened in Korea, two Japanese women who were studying abroad died during the party.<sup>12</sup> Like this news gives people very big impacts.

In conclusion, studying abroad in high school has both good points and bad points. The money problem is especially serious. Some organizations help students with money for abroad. It is up to you whether you go to study abroad or not. However I think experiences that can be gained from studying abroad can be very precious things. I also recommend studying abroad, even short term. English education in Japan does not have enough speaking practices and opportunities to use English. So Japan should give students a high level of English study like utilize native speakers.

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<sup>11</sup> Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology-Japan. "Trends in University Enrollment, etc."

<sup>12</sup> Nikkansports. "Halloween Crossing Accident in Seoul Kills 2 Japanese Women in Their Teens and 20s Studying Abroad; Death Toll Rises to 153." Nikkansports. October 30, 2022.

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## History of the Walt Disney Company

### I

The Walt Disney Company is one of the most famous media companies with a long history worldwide. In 2023, the Walt Disney Company celebrated its 100th anniversary. According to Statista, the revenue of the Walt Disney Company increased from about 34 billion U.S. dollars in 2006 to approximately 89 billion in 2023.<sup>1</sup> Additionally, they recently stated that they will release the film “Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs” live-action version in the spring of 2025. However, opinions about the movie, especially the views of the comments of the cast are mixed, with negative opinions being particularly noticeable.<sup>2</sup> This has been seen in other Disney films these days. In this essay, I will discuss the history of the Walt Disney Company and Walt Disney himself, especially focusing on Walt Disney’s leadership in order to understand what made the company successful and predict its future.

Walter Elias Disney and his brother Roy Oliver Disney were the main company's founders.<sup>3</sup> Walt Disney was born on December 5, 1901, in Chicago, Illinois, U.S., and spent most of his childhood in Kansas City. He joined the American Red Cross during World War I and returned home soon. Then, he set up his own company with Ub Iwerks who was the first employee and they created a series of animated shorts but their company soon went bankrupt. They started to produce a new series, the “Alice Comedies” and signed a contract with M. J. Winkler in 1923. Walt Disney also got financial support from Roy Oliver Disney who was Walt’s

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<sup>1</sup> Guttman, “Revenue of Walt Disney from 2006 to 2023,” Statista, 6 November, 2024

<sup>2</sup> Sanders Emma, “Disney’s Snow White: Has the fairy tale already gone sour?,” BBC, 15 August, 2023

<sup>3</sup> History.com Editors, “Walt Disney Company is founded,” History.com, 17 October, 2024

business partner for the rest of his life.<sup>4</sup> In the same year, Walt and Roy Disney set up the Disney Brother Cartoon Studio, known as “the Walt Disney Company” in Hollywood, California.<sup>5</sup>

In the early years of the company, Walt decided to move to an all-cartoon series, and he created the new character “Oswald the Lucky Rabbit” with the start of the new series.<sup>6</sup> However, M.J. Winkler and her husband, Charles Mintz, had taken over the character's rights.<sup>7</sup> Also, they stole the animators except for Then, he created a new character instead of Oswald, one of the most famous in the world, called “Mickey Mouse,” which made the Walt Disney Company a great success.<sup>8</sup> Then, he created the cartoon series, “Silly Symphonies” which didn't have a continuous character in 1929. One of them, “Flowers and Trees,” was the first full-color cartoon and won the Academy Award for Best Cartoon for 1932.<sup>9</sup> “Three Little Pigs” also won an Oscar in 1933 and the company’s cartoon won the Oscar every year for the rest of the decade. Additionally, the company made the characters, Mickey Mouse Friends, such as Donald, Goofy, and Minnie and they were also hits.<sup>10</sup>

In 1934, Walt decided to produce a feature film and began to do so.<sup>11</sup> This project went 400 percent beyond the financial plan, but the film, “Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs,” was successful and won critical raves, the adoration of the public, and one big and seven little special Oscars for him in 1937. After that, the success of “Pinocchio” in 1940, “Dumbo” in 1941, and “Bambi” in 1942 encouraged the company’s growth, and even the failure of “Fantasia” in 1940 and the strike in 1941 could not prevent them.<sup>12</sup> He also created two films during World War II

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<sup>4</sup> IMDb, “Walt Disney Biography,” IMDb, date unknown

<sup>5</sup> The Walt Disney Company, “1923,” The Walt Disney Company, Date unknown

<sup>6</sup> D23, “Disney History,” D23, Date unknown

<sup>7</sup> IMDb, “Walt Disney Biography,” IMDb, date unknown

<sup>8</sup> Beattie Andrew, “Walt Disney: How Entertainment Became an Empire,” Investopedia, 28 May, 2024

<sup>9</sup> D23, “Disney History,” D23, Date unknown

<sup>10</sup> IMDb, “Walt Disney Biography,” IMDb, date unknown

<sup>11</sup> History.com Editors, “Walt Disney Company is founded,” History.com, 17 October, 2024

<sup>12</sup> IMDb, “Walt Disney Biography,” IMDb, date unknown

at the request of the State Department but after the war, it was difficult for them to gain their pre-war footing.<sup>13</sup>

However, in 1950, he tried to make the first live-action film, “Treasure Island,” and the first Disney television show at Christmas. He also returned to create the classic animated feature film, “Cinderella.” He achieved success through them and was moving forward again. After Christmas, he started two other television series, “Disneyland (1954)” which lasted 29 years, and “The Mickey Mouse (1955)” which was one of the most famous and popular series for children.<sup>14</sup> He continued to produce animated films, including “Lady and Tramp” in 1955, “Sleeping Beauty” in 1959, and “101 Dalmatians” in 1961.<sup>15</sup> In 1955, he opened the theme park “Disneyland” in southern California, where children and adults could have fun. This was another great success.<sup>16</sup> In 1964, he produced the live-action musical film Merry Poppins. He also planned to build another theme park in Florida from the success of “Disneyland”. He achieved a lot of success and passed away on the 15th of December in 1966.<sup>17</sup> Roy Disney became the company's president instead of Walt and he carried on the plans to build a theme park in Florida and built “Walt Disney World” in 1971 to great success.<sup>18</sup> Roy died in late 1971.<sup>19</sup>

After the death of Walt and Roy Disney, the company cut their animation staff from 500 to 125 and they lost younger animators. Additionally, the executives believed the way of the future was film not animation and the new CEO Ron Miller decided to take a new approach to the film industry. This era was called the “Dark Ages” for Disney animation. Nevertheless, the

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<sup>13</sup> D23, “Disney History,” D23, Date unknown

<sup>14</sup> D23, “Disney History,” D23, Date unknown

<sup>15</sup> IMDb, “Walt Disney Biography,” IMDb, date unknown

<sup>16</sup> Aviram Adí, “A brief history of Disney,” Linearity, 25 July, 2022

<sup>17</sup> IMDb, “Walt Disney Biography,” IMDb, date unknown

<sup>18</sup> Luebering.J.E, “Disney Company,” Britannica, 12 November, 2024

<sup>19</sup> D23, “Disney History,” D23, Date unknown

company kept growing.<sup>20</sup> The board of the company ousted the executives including Miller. Instead, they hired Michael Eisner and Frank Wells as their new CEOs.

In 1983, “Tokyo Disney Land” was opened in Japan and was the first Disneyland outside the U.S.<sup>21</sup> In addition, they opened “Touchstone Pictures” as a subdivision of Disney which produced content for adults in 1984 and their first film was a hit. In the 1980s, their animations restarted slowly. The theatrical talents, including Howard Ashman and Alan Menken, helped their growth, such as “The Little Mermaid” in 1989 and “Beauty and the Beast” in 1991 nominated for Academy Awards. Furthermore, “Aladdin (1992),” “The Lion King (1994),” and “Pocahontas(1995)” were important for the company because they shifted to animated movies and it helped their unique formula of placing animated films at the center of the company's operations and expanding them into other divisions such as music, publishing, television, and theme parks.<sup>22</sup>

Their growth didn't stop, they bought a sports television network “ESPN” in 1996 and in 1997, they also bought the baseball team, “California Angels.”<sup>23</sup> <sup>24</sup> Under Robert Iger's leadership, they signed a 10-year partnership to share the costs and profits of Pixar's productions with Pixar in 2006. When Disney films slumped again, they took more companies under their wing, including Marvel Entertainment (2009), Lucasfilm (2012), and 21st Century Fox (2019).<sup>25</sup> Further, they kept building theme parks and creating a lot of films with great success, such as “Frozen” in 2013.<sup>26</sup> In recent years, they started a streaming service called Disney+, which included movies and television shows from Disney, Marvel, Pixar, Star Wars, and National

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<sup>20</sup> Holmes Jonathan, Reid Alastair, “How Disney took over the world,” BBC, Date unknown

<sup>21</sup> Holmes Jonathan, Reid Alastair, “How Disney took over the world,” BBC, Date unknown

<sup>22</sup> Kunze Peter. C, “How the Walt Disney Company Made It to 100,” TIME, 16 October, 2023

<sup>23</sup> Luebering.J.E, “Disney Company,” Britannica, 12 November, 2024

<sup>24</sup> Holmes Jonathan, Reid Alastair, “How Disney took over the world,” BBC, Date unknown

<sup>25</sup> Kunze Peter. C, “How the Walt Disney Company Made It to 100,” TIME, 16 October, 2023

<sup>26</sup> D23, “Disney History,” D23, Date unknown

Geographic. Within a day it gained 10 million subscribers.<sup>27 28</sup> However, the future of the Walt Disney Company is quite uncertain. Rumors are running that the difficult economic conditions in the streaming business will necessitate significant cost-cutting and even selling company parts. They need to consider their employees and their future carefully for their financial and social growth.<sup>29</sup>

In this essay, I discussed the history of the Walt Disney Company and Walt Disney himself, especially focusing on Walt Disney's leadership in order to understand what made the company successful and predict its future. The company's revenue was still growing from about 34 billion U.S. dollars in 2006 to approximately 89 billion in 2023 but there are many views for the recent operation. They tried to do many things like building theme parks, despite being an animation company, and establishing their operations to keep growing and trying new things which other companies never tired of is one of the best ways to achieve success for them. They should think of solutions for recent problems and consider their future.

## II

According to BBC, "Disney has withdrawn its claim that a man could not sue it over the death of his wife because of terms he signed up to in a free trial of Disney+. Jeffrey Piccolo filed a wrongful death lawsuit against Disney and the owners of a restaurant after his wife died in 2023 from a severe allergic reaction following a meal at Disney World, in Florida. Disney had argued the case should instead go to arbitration because of a clause in the terms and conditions of its Disney+ streaming service, which Mr Piccolo had briefly signed up for in 2019."<sup>30</sup> The uproar has put much blame on the Walt Disney Company. These days, as in this issue, the

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<sup>27</sup> Disney+, "Disney+," Disney+, Date unknown

<sup>28</sup> Holmes Jonathan, Reid Alastair, "How Disney took over the world," BBC, Date unknown

<sup>29</sup> Kunze Peter. C, "How the Walt Disney Company Made It to 100," TIME, 16 October, 2023

<sup>30</sup> Gerken Tom, "Disney drops bid to stop allergy death lawsuit over Disney+ terms," BBC, 20 August, 2024

company is claimed for its operations and responses. In this essay, I will discuss the three biggest current problems of the Walt Disney Company and their causes in order to analyse its challenges and predict its future.

First, the Walt Disney Company has trouble with its streaming service, “Disney+.” According to VARIETY, “Disney+ Core subscribers (which include U.S. and Canada customers, as well as international users, excluding the India-based Disney+ Hotstar) dropped to 111.3 million from the 112.6 million reported in the previous quarter, according to Disney’s quarterly earnings results released Wednesday.”<sup>31</sup> It was 1.2 percent of total subscribers.<sup>32</sup> This is because Disney+ raised the price of the ad-free Disney Plus service from 10.99 U.S. dollars per month or 100 U.S. dollars annually to 13.99 U.S. dollars per month or 140 U.S. dollars annually in October 2023. As a result of these price hikes, many people who subscribed canceled services.<sup>33</sup> In addition, password sharing which happens when people share their passwords with friends and family, allowing others access to the services without paying for a subscription is considered another cause of the subscribers decline and this is not only for Disney+ but also all other streaming services.<sup>34</sup>

Secondly, Disney films' lack of box office success in recent years has also been a problem. In the summer of 2024, the Walt Disney Company made “Inside Out 2” a great success. “Inside Out 2 has become the highest-grossing animated film of all time, six weeks after it was released in cinemas,” as stated by BBC.<sup>35</sup> However, according to COLLIDER, there has been no

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<sup>31</sup> Maas Jennifer, “Disney+ Drops 1.3 Million Subscribers Amid Price Hike, Streaming Loss Shrinks by \$300 Million,” VARIETY, 7 February, 2024

<sup>32</sup> MacArthur Greg, “Disney's Scary Tumble With Subscribers Confirms An Obvious Truth About Streaming's Future,” SCREEN RANT, 7 February, 2024

<sup>33</sup> MacArthur Greg, “Disney's Scary Tumble With Subscribers Confirms An Obvious Truth About Streaming's Future,” SCREEN RANT, 7 February, 2024

<sup>34</sup> Fitzgerald Toni, “Disney+ Sheds Record 11.7 Million Subscribers, Announcing Price Increase And Password Crackdown Coming,” Forbes, 10 August, 2023

<sup>35</sup> McIntosh Steven, “Inside Out 2 becomes biggest animated film ever,” BBC, 25 July, 2024

high-grossing movie in these five years except for “Inside Out 2.”<sup>36</sup> Also, “The Little Mermaid” began its box office run in May 2023 and grossed 560 million U.S. dollars (approximately 80 billion yen) worldwide, which is not too bad, but lower than expected for a production costing 250 million dollars (approximately 35.7 billion yen).<sup>37</sup> According to That Park Place, “After a half-decade of heavily partisan and ideological fare at the box office, Disney is still the winner for movie revenues... but those revenues have decreased dramatically.”<sup>38</sup> Moreover, the Walt Disney Company announced on the 9th of August 2023 “financial result for the period April to June 2023,” with a final loss of 460 million U.S. dollars, compared to a profit of 1.409 billion U.S. dollars in the same period a year earlier.<sup>39</sup> Because of Disney+, audiences knew they did not have to go to a theater to watch films and began waiting to stream the movies at Disney+.<sup>40</sup> Furthermore, audiences are tired of the same formula of the stories, and this trend is widespread in recent Marvel films.<sup>41</sup>

The last biggest issue of the company strongly connects to “political correctness.” John Musker who was the film director of “The Little Mermaid,” “Aladin,” “Moana,” “Hercules,” and “The Princess and the Frog.” criticised the current Walt Disney Company’s films have had more political messages ahead of storylines.<sup>42</sup> Further, Florida governor, Ron DeSantis labeled the Walt Disney Company a “woke” company making films that pursue a politically correct,

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<sup>36</sup> Heffernan Ryan, Zuniga Melissa, “The 30 Highest-Grossing Disney Animated Movies of All Time,” COLLIDER, 21 October, 2024

<sup>37</sup> Nakayama Atsuo, “なぜ世界中で「ディズニー離れ」が起きているのか...会社の売り上げを90倍にしたプロ経営者が見落としたこと,” PRESIDENT Online, 27 August, 2023

<sup>38</sup> WDW Pro, “Disney “Wins” the 2024 Box Office But Loses More than Half Its Audience Since 2019,” That Park Place, 18 December, 2024

<sup>39</sup> Nakayama Atsuo, “なぜ世界中で「ディズニー離れ」が起きているのか...会社の売り上げを90倍にしたプロ経営者が見落としたこと,” PRESIDENT Online, 27 August, 2023

<sup>40</sup> James Chloe, “Disney Dooms Disney+ To Salvage Its Box Office Success,” INSIDETHEMAGIC.com, 22 August, 2023

<sup>41</sup> Brand Vision Insights, “Box Office Blues: Disney’s Struggles with Flops in 2024,” Brand Vision Insights, 18 October, 2024

<sup>42</sup> Williams Lauren, “Disney director issues damning warning to company over politically correct priorities: ‘Course correction,’” GBnews, 28 May, 2024

LGBTQ+ agenda.<sup>43</sup> Also, political correctness got the company in trouble on both sides. Some people believe it has gone too far while others see this as a half-hearted effort to appease some people.<sup>44</sup> In addition, Disney's market cap had decreased from 341 billion dollars in February 2021 to 207 billion dollars in March 2024 which decreased by nearly 40 percent.<sup>45</sup>

In this essay, I discussed the three biggest recent issues of the Walt Disney Company and their causes in order to analyse its challenges and predict its future. In a court case in which Jeffrey Piccolo, the husband of a woman who died suddenly from an allergic reaction after eating at a Walt Disney World restaurant in October 2023, is suing Walt Disney Parks & Resorts and others for negligence on Disney's part. Disney Plus' contract, and sought to dismiss the lawsuit on the grounds of a "Disney Plus" agreement. There are three main problems of the recent Walt Disney Company. The decline of its subscription service users is one of its challenges and it decreased from 112.6 million to 111.3 million in just one quarter of a year. Further, the shortage of its box office success is a noteworthy issue. Also, it is a big problem that the company pays too much attention to "political correctness," because of this, the Walt Disney Company lost its market cap by 40 percent in 4 years. I think more people will not want to watch its films or use its services in the future if the company resolves the challenges it has had.

### III

The live-action remake movie of the 1937 animated classic Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs has been released since March 21, 2025. According to Box Office Mojo, "Snow White" has earned 145 million dollars globally so far, with about half of that total coming from the U.S. theatres.<sup>46</sup> Tragically, "Snow White" reported a 270 million dollars budget, which includes both

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<sup>43</sup> Dorn Charles, "Disney Has Been 'Woke' Before—And Right About It," TIME, 4 March, 2024

<sup>44</sup> Lye Rick, "While Trying To Appease Some People, Disney Has Angered Everyone With Its Selective Political Correctness," INSIDETHEMAGIC.com, 4 August, 2024

<sup>45</sup> Thaler Shannon, "Disney has harmed investors with 'woke' agenda pushing 'anti-police and anti-White content': letter," NEW YORK POST, 27 March, 2024

<sup>46</sup> Box Office Mojo by IMDbPro, "Snow White (2025)," Box Office Mojo by IMDbPro, date unknown

production and marketing costs, and Disney faces considerable losses.<sup>47</sup> This film's result affects another planned live-action movie, "Tangled." The Walt Disney Company's decision to put the project on hold followed a slump in box-office revenues for the live-action film, "Snow White."

<sup>48</sup> In this essay, I will discuss the solutions for recent problems the Walt Disney Company has faced in order to predict its future operation.

To begin with, the Walt Disney Company has been struggling with its streaming service, "Disney+." The total number of Disney+ subscribers was 125 million at the end of last year, a decline of 700,000 subscribers compared with 2023. This fall was due to the group's international operations, while the number of domestic subscribers slightly increased.<sup>49</sup> This was due to a rise in the price of subscriptions. The plan with advertisement went from 7.99 dollars per month to 9.99 dollars per month, and the advertising-free plan increased from 13.99 dollars to 15.99 dollars per month. The price rises were 25 percent and 14 percent, respectively.<sup>50</sup> Moreover, password-sharing between people living in different places and the end of time-limited promotions spurred a decline in subscribers.<sup>51</sup> <sup>52</sup> For these factors, they need to consider how to manage password-sharing to gain more subscribers and profits. Also, the company should increase the price to make more profit rather than gain a lot of subscribers. According to The Telegraph, "Disney's streaming business, which also includes its Hulu service in the US, posted a profit of 293 million dollars over the three months, up from a loss of 138 million dollars at the same time last year. Disney has reported three consecutive quarters of

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<sup>47</sup> McIntyre Hugh, "Disney's 'Snow White' Disappoints At The Box Office And On The Charts," Forbes, 4 April, 2025

<sup>48</sup> Barrett Sarah, "Disney's live-action Tangled is probably not happening after all," THE PARENT WATCH, 7 April, 2025

<sup>49</sup> Warrington James, "Disney+ subscribers plunge after price rise," The Telegraph, 5 February, 2025

<sup>50</sup> Hector Hamish, "Disney Plus lost 700,000 subscribers to price hikes, here's why that won't stop it doing more," yahoo! finance, 6 February, 2025

<sup>51</sup> Hector Hamish, "Disney Plus lost 700,000 subscribers to price hikes, here's why that won't stop it doing more," yahoo! finance, 6 February, 2025

<sup>52</sup> Warrington James, "Disney+ subscribers plunge after price rise," The Telegraph, 5 February, 2025

streaming profits as higher prices, a new advertising tier, and a password-sharing crackdown pay off.”<sup>53</sup>

In addition, the company is struggling at the box office. According to the review, the film, which came out in 2021, “Luca,” had one of the lowest box office sales of the decade because it lacked substance.<sup>54</sup> As I mentioned in the introduction, “It is only the fourth 2025 release to pass the \$80 million domestic milestone, but the huge Snow White budget remains a major hurdle. Because it reportedly cost roughly \$250 million, it must most likely gross \$625 million worldwide just to break even,” SCREENRANT stated.<sup>55</sup> The box office is easily affected by the content of the film. “Turning Red,” released in spring 2021, showed how the film's content was affected. Some critics suggested that the film portrayed women as hormonally overloaded and unable to control their emotions, and the film’s box office was 85 percent less than its budget.<sup>56</sup> Eric Handler is the managing director at Roth Capital Partners. “Theaters need to do a better job promoting the cinema experience and getting people to return.” Also, audiences are often looking for sequels to existing productions rather than new titles, which makes it easier for production companies to market and, therefore, more profitable.<sup>57</sup> Then, it can be one of the easiest ways for the Walt Disney Company to gain tremendous box office success.

In this essay, I discussed ways to solve the problems of the recent Walt Disney Company in order to predict its future operations. The company has faced significant financial losses because of the live-action film “Snow White.” The company has had some problems these days. The Walt Disney Company’s streaming service, “Disney+,” lost 700,000 subscribers in one year

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<sup>53</sup> Warrington James, “Disney+ subscribers plunge after price rise,” The Telegraph, 5 February, 2025

<sup>54</sup> Nance Jeni, “The decline of Disney animated movies: Has the magic died?,” the review, 10 May, 2024

<sup>55</sup> Klein Brennan, “Rachel Zegler's Snow White Crosses Another Major Box Office Milestone During Its Fourth Weekend,” SCREEN RANT, 13 April, 2025

<sup>56</sup> Nance Jeni, “The decline of Disney animated movies: Has the magic died?,” the review, 10 May, 2024

<sup>57</sup> Lang Brent, Rubin Rebecca, “Disney Recaptured Its Dominance in 2024 as Family Films and Sequels Ruled the Box Office,” VARIETY, 27 December, 2024

in 2024. Additionally, “Luca” had a less favorable outcome because of its content in 2021, and the box office sales of recent company films are also unfavorable. In conclusion, several solutions exist for the above issues, such as managing password-sharing, decreasing prices to gain more subscribers, and making the sequel films to increase the box office sales. The Walt Disney Company must think about its operations to solve problems. Also, it will profit more if it tries to do some of the solutions I mentioned.

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## Artificial Intelligence

### I

In today's world, artificial intelligence (AI) has taken centre stage for use in various fields such as medicine, education, finance, and so forth. Due to the emergence of conversational artificial intelligence, led by ChatGPT and Claude, in recent years, a wide range of industries and sectors is beginning to change significantly; AI will benefit our society largely. As a side note, although we often use the term "AI", it is extremely important to understand different types of artificial intelligence. "AI" can be broadly divided into three, artificial narrow intelligence (ANI)<sup>1</sup>, generative artificial intelligence (GAI)<sup>2</sup>, and artificial general intelligence (AGI). ANI primarily refers to a system that focuses on one single narrow task, with a limited range of abilities, for instance, virtual assistants like Siri and Alexa. GAI, a trending system, is designed to create new content such as text, images, or code, and is recognised for its use in ChatGPT. Additionally, AGI is an AI system, defined as "Autonomous systems that outperform humans at most economically valuable work" according to OpenAI<sup>3</sup>, but it has not been realised yet. Stephen Hawking, a theoretical physicist, warned, saying, "The development of full artificial intelligence could spell the end of the human race."<sup>4</sup>. This essay will examine the positives and negatives of artificial intelligence (including several types of AI like ANI and GAI, collectively referred to as "AI") to clarify both its capabilities and associated risks.

The benefits of artificial intelligence are numerous. Firstly, AI can automatically function similarly to humans without constant human intervention. Automating the work can get rid of

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<sup>1</sup> EDI, "The three different types of Artificial Intelligence – ANI, AGI and ASI, "

<sup>2</sup> McKinsey & Company, "What Is Generative AI?," McKinsey & Company, 2024

<sup>3</sup> OpenAI, "OpenAI Charter," OpenAI

<sup>4</sup> Economic Times, "Stephen Hawking Warned Artificial Intelligence Could End Human Race," Economic, 2018

repetitive and mundane tasks, allowing rapid task processing. With the development of AI, some of them have surpassed our capabilities in specific areas. For example, deep learning, which is a recent trend in AI development, has enabled AI to perform tasks with greater accuracy and speed than humans can. Automation driven by AI not only eliminates everyday repetitive and mundane tasks but also reduces human error dramatically. This allows organizations to focus on more strategic and creative endeavours<sup>5</sup>. Secondly, AI can optimise workflows in order to accelerate the process by utilizing the past and real-time data sets<sup>6</sup>. This goes beyond simple automation; optimisation refers to making things work more efficiently than before. By analysing tasks and objectives, AI can identify the most effective ways to solve problems or achieve goals, thereby boosting productivity and outcomes. They can also pinpoint bottlenecks and suggest adjustments that can stop these inefficiencies from happening repeatedly<sup>7</sup>. On top of that, it now plays a key role in forecasting conceivable future issues. AI models can predict potential delays or inefficiencies, allowing organizations to address problems before they manifest. In a word, AI's capacity to enhance efficiency and foresee issues is essential for organizational success. Lastly, AI is 24/7 available to work, unlike humans. This round-the-clock availability is a major advantage, enabling systems to function continuously without any breaks. As one example, AI-powered chatbots are widely used, allowing us to contact you anytime, which also leads to lower costs. DNB Bank has succeeded in automating 20% of all customer service with chatbots<sup>8</sup>.

On the other hand, the use of artificial intelligence has a variety of drawbacks. First, artificial intelligence is still developing and it is not such a perfect robot or system, so it is a large problem. Some researchers suggest that artificial intelligence has the potential to create ethical

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<sup>5</sup> Joyce Johnson, "What is AI Automation and Its Benefits," Camunda, 2024

<sup>6</sup> Guilherme Leme, "Can AI Process Optimization Improve Your Business Processes?," Pipefy, 2024

<sup>7</sup> Maja Stasiewicz, "AI Bottlenecks," RevDebug

<sup>8</sup> Boost.ai, "AI Chatbot for Banking," Boost.ai, 2024

issues. Due to the nature of AI being made by using a large data set of human beings such as books and articles on the internet, it can happen that they learn biased information and knowledge. According to a UNESCO study, generative AI often reinforces regressive gender stereotypes. Some AI can generate text that places women in subordinate or stereotypical roles based on their training data. Also, using that with deliberate malice, some people may be able to make fake news that looks very realistic. The extremely realistic fakes caused by AI are recently called AI-generated deepfakes. For instance, a study revealed that Russian-backed campaigns utilized AI to create and spread fake news targeting the U.S., aiming to undermine the political environment<sup>9</sup>. Moreover, the process of AI being made as mentioned above, which AI can create the output that appears plausible but is factually incorrect; this phenomenon is called “hallucination”. The sentences or output that are occurring hallucinations, it extremely difficult for non-expert people to identify whether they are correct or not. In fact, Wikipedia is under their negative influence<sup>10</sup>; although some volunteers on the internet have been attempting to compete with them, it is not realistic. In addition, expanding AI is also a threat to many workers because it leads to unemployment. Some jobs are at risk of being replaced by them. According to The Muse, jobs involving repetitive tasks are especially at risk.<sup>11</sup> For example, data entry clerks and telemarketers may see a decline because of more efficient AI systems. Furthermore, based on an analysis by Goldman Sachs, advancements in AI could automate tasks equivalent to 300 million full-time jobs globally.<sup>12</sup> This number represents approximately 9% of the worldwide workforce, indicating a possible significant shift in employment structures.

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<sup>9</sup> Mohar Chatterjee, "Russian disinformation accelerates toward the election," Politico, 2024

<sup>10</sup> Wikipedia, "Wikipedia:WikiProject AI Cleanup," Wikipedia

<sup>11</sup> The Muse, "What Jobs Will AI Replace?" The Muse

<sup>12</sup> Josh Howarth, "60+ Stats On AI Replacing Jobs (2024)," Exploding Topics, 2024

In conclusion, advancements in artificial intelligence shake the underlying social foundation, it optimises various systems such as in the company and brings benefits, however, it can turn into drawbacks, and the wider promotion of deepfake news and job displacements are more concerning. When AGI emerges, our society will change as nobody can expect. The essence of AI's benefit is that people are able to prioritise their own needs; it is not to be efficiency improvement. Though AI is still utilised by "Human-centric, some researchers suggest that we have to rethink that"<sup>13</sup>. In the world after replacing all jobs with AI, people lose their value in doing tasks, then, what is the significance left of human beings? So I think one answer to this question is people being able to prioritise their own needs. Some are afraid of the evolution of AI, but they should accept it shortly.

## II

With the technological breakthroughs in Artificial Intelligence (AI) over the past few years, particularly the leap in Generative AI, advanced nations face pressure to decide how to regulate AI properly. Even before the recent rapid advancement of AI, the EU had taken the lead in discussing AI regulation, establishing the AI Act in 2024.<sup>14</sup> Notably, this regulatory framework will likely serve as a precedent for future AI laws, with other nations potentially adopting similar approaches<sup>15</sup>. Furthermore, these regulations may apply to non-EU countries that trade with EU members. However, because of AI's "creative nature", creating effective regulations involving this technology poses several significant challenges. Since AI's generative processes are essentially a black box,<sup>16</sup> it is practically impossible to comprehend the operational requirements fully. When paired with AI's unpredictable hallucinations (erroneous outputs)<sup>17</sup>This

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<sup>13</sup> Nandita Mellamphy, "Re-thinking 'Human-centric' AI: An Introduction to Posthumanist Critique," EuropeNow, 2021

<sup>14</sup> Europa Union, "High-level summary of the AI Act", EU Artificial Intelligence Act, 2024

<sup>15</sup> Europa Union, "AI Act", Europa EU, 2024

<sup>16</sup> Rahul Awati, "What is black box AI?", Techtargget, 2024

<sup>17</sup> IMB, "What are AI hallucinations?", IMB, 2023

lack of transparency presents significant challenges to creating efficient regulatory frameworks. By contrast, traditional technology regulations—such as those governing energy, aviation, and medical devices—have succeeded by establishing clear safety standards to ensure security.<sup>18</sup> However, the risks and impacts of AI are far more diverse. For instance, social risks include the proliferation of deepfakes, which may exacerbate political unrest, and the emergence of AI-governed surveillance societies devoid of human intervention. In addition, serious ethical concerns arise from the militarisation of AI, such as its use in weaponry and the lack of fairness caused by biases in training data.

Nevertheless, AI represents a groundbreaking technology with the potential to propel society into the future. Therefore, outright rejection of AI would impede social progress. Applying conventional regulatory models to AI may not be feasible. This essay will compare the EU's groundbreaking AI Act with approaches taken by nations such as the US and Japan to understand the current state of AI regulation better.

The EU decided upon the Artificial Intelligence Act (AI Act), the world's first comprehensive legal framework for AI. As part of a broader digital strategy, the European Commission agreed in April 2021 to develop a new regulatory framework for artificial intelligence. The European Parliament approved the AI Act in March, and on August 1 2024, it became operative throughout the European Union. The provisions are expected to be implemented gradually over the next few years. This framework aims to optimize the benefits of innovation while upholding safety and fundamental human rights, and it is the industry standard for regulating AI. However, why is AI regulation so urgent? It is impossible to ignore the rapid advancement of AI technology or underestimate the dangers associated with its creation. One indication of the growing interest in this technology is deepfake technology, a byproduct of

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<sup>18</sup> Judge, Brian, "When code isn't law: rethinking regulation for artificial intelligence," Oxford Academic, 2024

advanced AI development. In countries like the US, where harrowing AI laws are still being inked, the aggregate stake is on each sole company to bring its AI into compliance. Thus, the trend of misuse raises the potential necessity for global AI legal standards. The AI Act regulates AI systems based on the levels of that Risk. They are as follows: Low Risk (not regulated), Limited Risk (with transparency requirements,) High Risk (requirements to adhere to regulations) and Unacceptable Risk (prohibit systems)<sup>19</sup>. AI systems must conform to the guidelines matching each category's risk level. High-risk AI systems are subject to rigorous transparency and accountability requirements. High Risk stands out among these classifications due to the stringent regulations that apply to businesses, which can be highly burdensome. One primary concern is the potential for these regulations to obstruct the development of AI in the EU. Companies may choose to move to countries like the US or Japan with less restrictive laws to avoid the resource-intensive requirements imposed by the AI Act. This could ultimately make the EU fall behind in the global AI industry.

Unlike the United States's approach to AI regulation, the EU AI Act is comprehensive and organised<sup>20</sup>. Whereas the EU adopts a precautionary approach by categorising AI systems according to the level of Risk with strict regulations on high-risk applications, the US prioritises flexibility and innovation. High-risk systems in the EU are subject to stringent compliance requirements such as required risk assessments, transparency requirements, and data documentation, which guarantee strong protection against possible harm. On the other hand, the US regulatory framework lacks a unified national structure. Instead, it is based on state-level and sector-specific laws that differ significantly in their application and enforcement. The US strategy is distinguished by its focus on promoting quick technical development. The lack of

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<sup>19</sup> Gopalasamy, Param, "Navigating the EU AI Act", Onetrust, Navigating the EU AI Act, 2023

<sup>20</sup> PWC, "Overview of 'The Executive Order on the Safe, Secure, and Trustworthy Development and Use of Artificial Intelligence'", PWC, 2024

strict federal regulations helps big tech companies like Microsoft, Google and OpenAI experiment and introduce AI technologies quickly. Significant societal risks accompany this flexibility, including biased algorithms, privacy violations, and the spread of deepfakes.

In Japan, no comprehensive regulation specifically targeting artificial intelligence exists.<sup>21</sup> While the EU has implemented strict AI regulations, Japan has primarily relied on "soft law" measures, such as non-binding guidelines, to govern AI use. The Japanese government is deliberating on establishing a "Basic Law for AI Promotion (provisional title)" and plans to submit the bill during the 2025 regular Diet session. However, Japan remains noticeably cautious in its regulatory approach compared to Western nations. Some in Japan believe that strict regulations could hinder technological innovation and oppose imposing heavy restrictions on AI. Fortunately, Japan has not experienced major AI-related incidents like those in the United States. Nonetheless, discussions around AI regulation are proceeding carefully, emphasising ensuring that innovation is not stifled while addressing the potential dangers AI could pose in the future. On the other hand, Japan's relatively lenient stance on AI regulation may provide an opportunity to position the country as a leading innovator. By maintaining a lighter regulatory framework than other nations, Japan seeks to capitalise on its potential to become a global leader in AI development.

In conclusion, regulating artificial intelligence is a complex and dynamic challenge that requires a deep understanding of the technology and its implications. The EU has pioneered its comprehensive AI Act to balance innovation with safety and ethical considerations. However, its stringent requirements burden companies and potentially hinder regional AI development. In contrast, the US adopts a more flexible and innovation-driven approach, which fosters rapid technological advancement but leaves gaps in addressing societal risks such as fairness,

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<sup>21</sup> Shimbo, Fumio, "AI Regulation Theory," Keio University, 2022

accountability, and privacy. On the other hand, Japan represents a middle ground, relying on non-binding guidelines while cautiously exploring establishing a more structured regulatory framework. This leniency may allow Japan to strengthen its position in the global AI landscape, but it also underscores the need for proactive measures to address future risks. Ultimately, effective AI regulation requires a balance between fostering innovation and ensuring societal protection. Flexibility, adaptability, and international cooperation will be crucial as AI technology continues to evolve at an unprecedented pace, shaping the future of industries and societies worldwide.

### III

According to the Future of Jobs Report 2025 by the World Economic Forum.<sup>22</sup> Approximately 23% of jobs will change by 2027 due to technological advancements, including Artificial Intelligence(AI). Yet, the pressing concern is not merely job displacement—it is the capacity of individuals and institutions to adapt to the transformative landscape shaped by artificial intelligence. In my previous essays, I explored what AI is and how its rapid growth raises serious concerns about regulation and hidden risks. Through these discussions, it has become clear that artificial intelligence presents not just one, but several distinct challenges that modern society must confront. First, the lack of a basic understanding of AI among the public increases the risk of harmful misuse, such as discrimination and the spreading of deepfakes. Second, the speed of AI’s development risks outpacing our ability to adapt, potentially leading to large-scale unemployment and even social disruption. Third, the absence of unified international regulations has caused both overregulation and underregulation, limiting innovation and trust. To address these urgent issues, this essay will propose three solutions. Introducing AI ethics into school curriculums can help prevent misuse. Government-led reskilling systems are essential to

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<sup>22</sup> World Economic Forum, "The Future of Jobs Report 2025," Weforum.org, 2025

help people adjust to changing job markets. Lastly, global coordination through a flexible regulatory framework can help balance innovation with responsibility. By tackling these problems from different angles, we can build a future where AI works for everyone.

One of the most urgent risks posed by artificial intelligence is its potential to reproduce and amplify social biases. Since AI systems learn from human data, they may inherit discriminatory patterns related to gender, race, or other factors.<sup>23</sup> For example, Amazon once developed an AI recruitment tool that unintentionally penalised female candidates, as the system was trained on résumés submitted mostly by men.<sup>24</sup> It downgraded applications that included words like "women's" or referenced all-women colleges. In addition, the rise of generative AI has made it easier to spread deepfakes and fake news, which could damage reputations, influence elections, and weaken democracy. Despite these serious concerns, many people still lack basic awareness of how AI works and what ethical risks it carries. This lack of knowledge can lead to unintentional misuse of AI systems, or worse, being manipulated by them without realising it. In other words, those who do not understand AI may end up being controlled by it. Although some universities now offer AI ethics courses, they are often electives and not widely taken. As a result, education about AI's risks and ethical use should not be limited to higher education. I believe that AI ethics should be introduced as part of the curriculum in secondary schools. This does not mean teaching technical programming or algorithms. Instead, students should learn about the potential harms of biased AI, the dangers of misinformation, and the importance of using technology responsibly. In fact, several countries have already started to take action. In the U.S. state of Georgia, a high school dedicated to AI offers vocational courses that include AI

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<sup>23</sup> Burke, Garance, "Health Providers Say AI Chatbots Could Improve Care. But Research Says Some Are Perpetuating Racism," AP News, 2023

<sup>24</sup> Dastin, Jeffrey, "Amazon Scraps Secret AI Recruiting Tool That Showed Bias Against Women," Reuters, 2018

literacy and ethical thinking.<sup>25</sup> The ActiveAI project has also developed an app to teach middle school students about AI through real-life scenarios.<sup>26</sup> These pioneering examples show that it is possible—and necessary—to educate young people early about AI, so they can become informed and responsible users in the future.

One of the most common concerns about artificial intelligence is the fear of widespread unemployment. Many jobs, especially those involving repetitive tasks, are at high risk of being replaced by AI. However, this issue is only the surface of a much deeper problem. The true challenge lies in the inability of individuals and societies to adapt to the rapidly changing labour market driven by technological innovation. As AI develops at an exponential pace, it is not only disrupting specific job categories but also transforming the entire structure of the workforce. While AI may eliminate some jobs, it also creates new roles—such as data analysts, AI trainers, and prompt engineers—that require different skills. The problem is that many people are unprepared for such a sudden shift. Without proper support, this adaptation gap could lead to mass unemployment, social inequality, and even the collapse of social systems. To avoid such outcomes, governments must take the lead in preparing their citizens for the future. This issue is too large and complex to leave to individuals alone. A strong and continuous public system for reskilling and upskilling is essential. For example, Singapore has launched a national program called TeSA (TechSkills Accelerator),<sup>27</sup> which has helped thousands of citizens learn in-demand AI-related skills. In Sweden, job security councils offer coaching, training, and financial support to people who lose their jobs due to automation,<sup>28</sup> resulting in a remarkable re-employment rate of over 90%. These real-world examples show that with proper government involvement, it is

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<sup>25</sup> Wikipedia, "Seckinger High School," Wikipedia

<sup>26</sup> Tseng, Ying Jui and Gautam Yadav, "Introducing AI Literacy for Middle School Learners with Goal-based Scenarios," Arxiv.org, 2023

<sup>27</sup> OpenGov Asia, "Singapore Trains 3,000 Citizens in 5G Skills," *Opengovasia.com*, 2021

<sup>28</sup> IMIT, "The Job Security Councils in Sweden," *IMIT*, 2006

possible to help workers transition to new opportunities instead of being left behind. In short, while job loss may seem like the biggest danger of AI, the real issue is the failure to adapt. A national-level effort is required to build a workforce that can thrive, not just survive, in the age of AI.

As AI technologies, especially generative AI like ChatGPT, continue to evolve rapidly, international organizations such as the European Union and the United Nations have started creating regulatory frameworks to manage their risks.<sup>29</sup> However, there is currently no unified global standard. Different countries have taken different approaches to AI governance. For example, the European Union has strict rules focusing on safety and ethics, which may slow down innovation. In contrast, the United States has a more relaxed approach that allows fast technological growth but often lacks strong protections against ethical misuse. Japan, meanwhile, mainly relies on non-binding guidelines, and its legal system for AI is still developing. This imbalance creates serious global challenges. In countries with strict regulations, companies may fear legal restrictions and hesitate to develop or adopt new AI technologies. On the other hand, in places with weak regulations, unethical or harmful AI systems may be used without proper oversight. As a result, unreliable AI technologies can spread in international markets, lowering public trust and reducing the overall quality of innovation. The core issue is that AI is a global technology that crosses borders, while the rules and values of each country differ greatly. It is unrealistic to expect all nations to follow the same law. That is why we need what is called “soft harmonization.” This approach does not require identical regulations in every country. Instead, it promotes the idea of a shared international framework—based on common principles like fairness, transparency, and safety—while allowing each country to adjust their policies according to its own political, economic, and cultural conditions. By encouraging soft harmonization, we

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<sup>29</sup> Heller, Isaac, "Will Regulating AI Hinder Innovation?," *Trullion.com*

can strike a better balance between safety and innovation. It allows countries to cooperate on global AI standards without sacrificing national independence. Over time, such a system can help ensure that AI is developed responsibly and used in ways that benefit all of humanity.

In conclusion, as artificial intelligence continues to reshape our world, it brings not only great potential but also significant risks. To manage these challenges, society must act on multiple levels. First, AI ethics should be taught in secondary education to raise public awareness and prevent misuse. Second, national governments must create sustainable reskilling systems to support workers in adapting to rapid technological change. Third, international cooperation is needed to build a shared regulatory framework through soft harmonization, allowing each country to balance safety and innovation in its way. These solutions are not simple, and the road ahead will be long. But if we take action now—guided by responsibility, flexibility, and collaboration—we can not only overcome the challenges brought by AI but also use this technology to rebuild a more fair, informed, and connected world. Humanity has overcome great transitions before—and by acting wisely today, we can shape a future where AI strengthens our societies, rather than divides them.

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## Effects of overtourism in Japan

### I

Overtourism is a global phenomenon that affects many countries, but it has been a serious problem in Japan in recent years. According to Japan National Tourism Organization (JNTO), in March 2024, Japan saw 3.1 million international visitors, marking the first time the monthly figure surpassed 3 million.<sup>1</sup> Overtourism can have a positive economic impact, but it has a more negative impact on the environment and local communities. In this essay, I will discuss three perspectives, including environmental impacts, social and cultural impacts, and transportation impacts.

First of all, I will describe the environmental impacts of overtourism in Nara and Mt. Fuji. Nara Park is home to more than 1,200 free-roaming deer, who are protected by law. In 2019, five deer died in Nara park and 4.3 kg of plastic waste was found in their stomach.<sup>2</sup> Littering by many tourists has become a serious problem that destroys the natural environment. At Mt. Fuji, the large amount of waste left behind, including plastic bottles, food and even clothing, is a major concern.<sup>3</sup> This has led to a loss of value and sanctity as a World Heritage Site. Also, overtourism contributes to global warming. According to UNWTO, by 2030 transport-related CO2 emissions from tourism will grow 25% from 2016 levels. This growth in CO2 emissions will represent 5,3% of all man-made emissions in 2030 from 5% in 2016.<sup>4</sup>

Overtourism affects culture and society. In Gion, Kyoto, tourists have caused an increase in the harassment of geisha, a symbol of traditional Japanese culture. Some tourists unfamiliar

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<sup>1</sup> Japan National Tourism Organization “Number of foreign visitors to Japan (estimated figure as of March 2024).” Japan National Tourism Organization. 2024.

<sup>2</sup> “Efforts to prevent the deer from eating garbage.” NHK WORLD-JAPAN News. 2019.

<sup>3</sup> Mari Yamaguchi. “Climbing limits are being set on Mount Fuji to fight crowds and littering.” AP News. 2024.

<sup>4</sup> UNWTO “World Tourism Organization and International Transport Forum.” UNWTO. 2019.

with local etiquette were accused of harassment and physical assault, touching geisha kimonos, blocking their way, and demanding photographs.<sup>5</sup> Overtourism has damaged the privacy of geisha and cultural respect for local traditions in Kyoto. In addition, local communities are deprived. In the benchmark land prices published this year, there was a significant increase in land prices in popular tourist destinations and resorts.<sup>6</sup> The influx of tourists can raise the cost of living, make it harder to find reasonably priced housing and displace residents.<sup>7</sup> Even though tourism brings in significant income, many local residents feel left out of the tourism economy. The rude actions of tourists cause anger among the residents and make them feel that tourism is decreasing their quality of life, which escalates social tensions.

Finally, I will describe the transportation impacts of overtourism. In Kamakura, there is a railway crossing made famous by the basketball anime “Slam Dunk.” Many tourists visit there and most of them take pictures from the side of the road leading down to the track. However, there are also people standing in the middle of the road. This has led to several close calls with passing drivers and cyclists and is really dangerous.<sup>8</sup> In addition, there are problems on trains and at stations because of large tourist suitcases. Tourists can easily travel by train to their hotels, for example at Haneda Airport in Tokyo or Kansai International Airport in Osaka. However, large suitcases clog up train space during rush hour. Even worse, tourists carrying luggage usually use the elevator from the train platform to the station exit. This makes it more difficult for people with disabilities and parents with pushchairs to use them.<sup>9</sup> In fact, overcrowding is also a

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<sup>5</sup> James Saunders-Wyndham, “Kyoto’s Geisha District Bans Tourists to Protect Cultural Heritage.” *Romancing Japan*. 2024.

<sup>6</sup> Nobuko Masuda. ” Chika kōtō no shutoken ya kankō-chi `satsu sen'de wa kaibikae, jōshō ni kageri mo.” *Asahi Newspaper Digital*. 2024.

<sup>7</sup> Kaitlyn Bra. “What Is Overtourism and Why Is It a Problem?” *Sustainable Travel International*. 2024.

<sup>8</sup> Jay Allen. “Tourist Areas in Japan Struggle with Ill-Mannered Visitors.” *Unseen Japan*. 2023.

<sup>9</sup> Jay Allen. “Japan Tourist’s Suitcases Are Frustrating Locals.” *Unseen Japan*. 2024.

problem for tourists. They are trapped in long lines, and cannot visit museums, galleries and sites without prior booking which may make the tourist experience more difficult for people.<sup>10</sup>

In conclusion, overtourism in Japan is a complex issue requiring a balanced approach. Although there are economic benefits of tourism, there are significant negative environmental, cultural, social and transport impacts. While Japan continues to attract record numbers of visitors, it is necessary to find sustainable solutions that manage tourism growth and protect the cultural and natural wealth.

## II

In my previous essay, I discussed the effects of tourism in Japan. It can be divided into three perspectives, including environmental impacts, social and cultural impacts, and transportation impacts. Specifically, the issues mentioned were environmental damage, negative impacts on the daily lives of the local residents and overcrowding at tourist attractions and on public transport. To manage tourism growth and protect the cultural and natural wealth, it is essential to take measures to solve overtourism. In this essay, I will introduce the new initiatives of the Japanese Government to solve overtourism.

To begin with, the Japanese government promoted new destinations and experiences in Japan to the world. Basically, the problem is that a lot of tourists are heading to the same number of places. There are many attractive regions in Japan that are unknown to tourists. However, as many tourists are visiting Japan for the first time, they naturally come to cities such as Tokyo and Kyoto, as their attractions are well known. Consequently, it leads to overcrowding. In 2023, the Japan Tourist Agency has identified 11 ‘model tourism destinations’ around the country that it wants to promote, including the Shiretoko Peninsula in eastern Hokkaido; Mount Hachimantai,

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<sup>10</sup> Kate Leahy. “Is overtourism a problem?” National Geographic. 2023

and the Hokuriku region, which is famed for its samurai heritage.<sup>11</sup> This would take the pressure off places like Kyoto and Mount Fuji, while raising awareness of places that could do with more tourism. Also, by visiting the Tohoku region, tourists can support the areas that were devastated by the earthquake and tsunami.

In addition, the government conducted an information campaign for tourists to reduce the negative impact on the local residents.<sup>12</sup> Because of cultural differences, misunderstandings of the rules in tourist destinations cannot be avoided. Educating visitors about the local culture and rules is essential to managing tourists' behaviour. Kyoto's official tourism office has put up posters and distributed pamphlets about different social customs in Japan, from how to use toilets to whether to tip. The advice also extends to geisha, with visitors asked not to touch the women, pull on their kimonos, or take their photos without permission.<sup>13</sup> Additionally, cooperation with local communities is important for promoting sustainable tourism. If local authorities prioritise increased tourist numbers and business taxes over the welfare of local residents, this can lead to resentment. Instead, they should be partners with local people in the development of tourism in the places where they live and work. For example, Chino City, Nagano Prefecture, includes its citizens as part of the hospitality experience.<sup>14</sup> By welcoming the tourists themselves, the citizens transform the unique local lifestyle, daily handicrafts and industries into a unique experience for the tourists. In detail, tourists can experience the real life of the people living in Chino by cooking with the grandmothers of the village, preparing traditional dishes using local ingredients, making their own Japanese knives and helping with the harvest with the farmers. They can create special memories and have experiences that tourists do not normally have. This can lead to local

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<sup>11</sup> The Yomiuri shimbun. "Japan Selects 11 'Model Tourism Destinations' to Promote Regional Areas." The Yomiuri Shimbun. 2023.

<sup>12</sup> Rob Perkins. "Overtourism in Japan." Responsible Travel. 2023

<sup>13</sup> Lilit Marcus. "Popular Tokyo neighborhood to ban drinking in public places." CNN. 2024

<sup>14</sup> Samantha Lees. "'Kankou Machizukuri', Using Tourism for Sustainable Community Development in Japan." Tricolage. 2022

people themselves finding new values in their ‘everyday life’ and becoming proud of their local community and the environment in which they live.

Finally, Kyoto City promoted registration on HANDS FREE KYOTO, a hand-free tourism information website, to reduce crowding on public transport. When tourists bring large luggage, such as suitcases on buses and trains, this can cause overcrowding and even prevent local residents from using their own transport. To address this, during the autumn and spring tourist season, baggage drop-off points have been set up around Kyoto Station, delivery services to accommodation facilities and an advance booking system has been introduced. Also, In 2024, a private bus that can carry large luggage was introduced, which starts from Kyoto Station and travels to accommodation facilities in the city.<sup>15</sup> This led to a demonstration project to establish a new style of tourism, called ‘accommodation-based tourism’, in which visitors leave their baggage at accommodation facilities before sightseeing.

In conclusion, the Japanese government has actively addressed the problems of over tourism through measures such as promoting less known destinations, educating tourists about local rules, promoting cooperation with local communities and improving the transport system. These measures not only reduce pressure on popular tourist destinations, but also improve the quality of travel and support the local economy. By continuing to implement these strategies, Japan can promote sustainable tourism while growing as a tourism country. Also, these efforts could preserve cultural and natural treasures of Japan in the future and develop a balanced relationship between tourism and local life.

### III

In my essays part one and part two, I discussed the effects of tourism in Japan and introduced some strategies that Japanese governments do to solve overtourism. In more detail,

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<sup>15</sup> Kyoto City. “Main initiatives in 2024.” 2024

they actively addressed overtourism by encouraging travel to lesser-known destinations, educating tourists about local customs, promoting cooperation with local communities, and enhancing transportation infrastructure. In this essay, I will compare and contrast the measures to prevent overtourism in tourist destinations around the world.

First of all, I will introduce some common strategies implemented around the world. One approach to manage tourist flows is by reducing accessibility. Nowadays, some cities have turned to tourism taxes as a way to stop overtourism. According to National Geographic, overcrowded landmarks like Las Ramblas in Barcelona, Dam Square in Amsterdam, and St. Mark's Square in Venice has led these cities to introduce or raise tourist taxes to manage congestion and ease local frustration.<sup>16</sup> Similarly, Lisbon plans to double its tourist tax from \$2.15 to \$4.30 in 2024 and Paris has more than tripled its tourist tax on accommodation in recent years.<sup>17</sup> This can generate income for infrastructure development and calm tourist flows. Unlike tourist taxes, which apply only to overnight visitors, some cities and destinations impose entry fees on all arrivals. A growing number of locations are introducing entry fees for cultural sites that were previously free. For instance, in January 2024, Turkey introduced a €25 fee for foreign tourists visiting Istanbul's iconic sixth-century monument, Hagia Sophia, now a mosque.<sup>18</sup> In addition, in April, Venice implemented a €5 fee for day visitors to enter the city.<sup>19</sup> This also helps the city regulate daily visitor numbers.

Secondly, I will talk about several innovative approaches being carried out globally to address overtourism. Some tourist destinations have introduced timed entries to spread out visitors. One of the examples is the ancient Inca citadel Machu Picchu, where local authorities

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<sup>16</sup> Ronan O'Connell. "A look at Europe's tourist taxes—have they helped curb overcrowding?" National Geographic. 2024

<sup>17</sup> Planetizen.com. "Balancing Act: 7 Strategies to Curb Overtourism." Planetizen. 2024

<sup>18</sup> AFP - Agence France Presse. "Turkey Starts Charging Foreign Tourists To Visit Hagia Sophia." AFP news. 2024

<sup>19</sup> Erica Firpo. "Venice's New Tourist Entry Fee Just Went Into Effect—Here's What to Know." AFAR Media. 2024

manage timed entry tickets to access the UNESCO World Heritage site. In some countries, this strategy is implemented at a national level. For instance, NBTC Holland Marketing aims to distribute tourism more evenly across the country, encouraging international visitors to explore destinations beyond Amsterdam and helping to reduce the strain on the city.<sup>20</sup> Moreover, some destinations are implementing technology-driven solutions. For example, Pilsen, Czech Republic, introduced apps called SmartGuide in their tourism. SmartGuide is a top travel application, offering more than 1,200 guides in one app with auto translation, self guided audio tours, offline maps, and expert storytelling to enhance local experiences. Pilsen introduced tours and informational content in multiple languages on SmartGuide.<sup>21</sup> This strategy helped non-Czech-speaking tourists explore beyond major landmarks by offering guides in German, Italian, and Spanish, making Pilsen's lesser known attractions more accessible. Moreover, some destinations carried out Smart Destinations Management Systems. They invest in real-time monitoring systems to track visitor movements and environmental indicators, enabling better crowd control and infrastructure management.<sup>22</sup>

Finally, I will explain the contrasting situations in overtourism management between touristic cities and natural attractions. When addressing overtourism, strategies vary widely depending on the situation of destination. Urban cities often experience housing shortages due to the conversion of residential properties into short-term tourist accommodations. In June 2024, Barcelona Mayor Jaume Collboni announced plans to prohibit short-term apartment rentals by the end of 2029, and this decision could revoke over 10,000 rental licenses. At the same time, Florence, Italy banned new short term rentals in its historic centre to manage overtourism and is

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<sup>20</sup> Ewout Versloot. "Is dispersal the solution to overtourism?" ParadiseFound. 2019

<sup>21</sup> SmartGuide. "How personalized recommendations help disperse tourists and reduce overcrowding in hotspots." SmartGuide. 2024

<sup>22</sup> Gemma Greenwood. "Quality over quantity: strategies for mitigating overtourism." WTM Global Hub. 2024

offering three years of tax incentives to landlords who switch to long-term leasing. Additionally, cities can improve their infrastructure to manage large numbers of tourists while protecting the lives of local residents from being affected by overtourism. In Bruges, parties on the streets are prohibited and tourist buses are not allowed to access the city centre. The use of scooters and tourist taxis is also regulated to ensure that the 8 million annual tourists do not cause inconvenience to Bruges' 100,000 residents.<sup>23</sup> While urban areas focus on housing and infrastructure regulation, natural attractions emphasize environmental protection and sustainability. For example, Costa Rica strictly limits the number of visitors to their national parks by increasing ticket prices for group tourists to protect biodiversity.<sup>24</sup> Additionally, in Scotland, the Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund provided grants to invest in green infrastructure such as electric vehicle charging points and sustainable walkways.<sup>25</sup> These investments help mitigate environmental impact.

In conclusion, preventing overtourism requires strategies that balance tourism growth with sustainability. Common measures like tourist taxes and entry fees help regulate tourist numbers, while innovative strategies such as timed entry and technology-driven solutions enhance management. Urban areas focus on housing and infrastructure adjustments to protect residents, while natural destinations prioritize environmental conservation by limiting visitors and green investments. It is important to combine regulation, innovation and sustainability to ensure tourism destinations are beneficial for both local residents and tourists, and for future generations.

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<sup>23</sup> acciona. "How to combat overtourism." acciona. 2016

<sup>24</sup> Joanna Nowak. "Overtourism: What is it? Can we avoid it?" Worldpackers. 2023

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## Football

### I

Football became the most popular sport in the world recently. A lot of people all over the world play football and 3.5 billion people are fans of football.<sup>1</sup> How did football evolve? How was football born? According to the football history organization, the present football form was born in the middle of the 19th century, but the alternative form of football existed much earlier.<sup>2</sup> There are some prevailing theories about football origin. In this essay, I will show the history of football based on the theory of its origin in England, how it was born and how it evolved.

First, in medieval England, it was common to cut off the head of an opposing general when winning a war. After the war, the soldiers who won the war kicked the head of an opposing general as amusement. This became a base for football. In fact, the first recorded use of the word 'football' in English is in 1314.<sup>3</sup> After 350 years, there were over 30 bans. This means football was a popular sport but it was a nuisance. In the past, players could punch or kick other players, so sometimes they could die. However, the foundation of modern football was born in 1863 in England by the establishment of the Football Association (FA). Thanks to that, football has become an amusement and more popular sport than before. FA consists of 11 clubs in London and the suburbs. Firstly, the FA set some rules for football including the size of goal and the size of pitch. The general rule during the match is don't hold a ball with their hand, don't kick a player and so on. By the establishment of the FA, football is separated from rugby.

The football formation and tactics changed through the years. The first successful football team used a 1-2-7 formation. In this period, the important thing was individual dribble

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<sup>1</sup> Veroutsos, Eleni, "The Most Popular Sports In The World", WorldAtlas, 2023

<sup>2</sup> Football History Organization, "Football History", Football History Organization, 2024

<sup>3</sup> Inglis, Simon, "The history of football in England", English Heritage, date unknown

skill. In 1990, the FA changed the offside rule to present one. After that, Western Germany used a 3-5-2 formation in the 1990 World Cup, and they won a championship. From 2010, 4-2-3-1 was commonly used especially in the Spanish league (La Liga). However, there is no perfect formation because the best formation depends on the match situation, the other team's formation and their own team players.<sup>4</sup> The first most successful tactic was 'Total football' in the Netherlands. It was about players dropping deep and flowing wide to create space, and Johan Cruyff made it happen. Total football changed to 'Tiki Taka' in Barcelona after Cruyff became a manager of Barcelona. Tiki Taka is a possession football with short passes, and aggressive pressure while off the ball. On the other hand, in Italy, 'Catenaccio' became a popular tactic. That was a tactic that absorbs the opponent's attack and after winning the ball performs a quick counter-attack with compact defensive formation. These days, high pressure and gegenpressing are general tactics. That was succeeded by Jürgen Klopp. These tactics are immediate pressing after losing the ball. On the other hand, Pep Guardiola is based on total football and Tiki Taka, and he introduced more controlled pressing and positional play. Also, recently, football tactics keep evolving and managers are using hybrid formation or flexible systems that can change during the match.<sup>5</sup>

In conclusion, football has changed through the years. Football tactics are different by each team or manager, and it keeps changing. I picked one theory that football was born in England, but there are a lot of theories, for example, the Chinese army which over 300 BC played a type of football played by courtiers in ancient Japan as military training.<sup>6</sup> Therefore football is a very deep and interesting sport.

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<sup>4</sup> Football History Organization, "Formations and systems in football", Football History Organization, date unknown

<sup>5</sup> Author unknown, "The Evolution of Soccer Tactics: From Total Football to Modern High Pressing", EVERYBODY SOCCER, 2024

<sup>6</sup> Football History Organization, "History of football", Football History Organization, date unknown

## II

Football has long fascinated humanity, such as people, the local community, country, and the world. According to Row Z journeys around football, the number of visitors increased in three of the five major European leagues from 1988 to 2013, indicating its growing popularity.<sup>7</sup> Also, the revenue of football has steadily increased since 1996, proving its economic impact<sup>8</sup>. So, what has influenced and attracted them about football? In this essay, I will write about football effects for sociability of children and its significant impact on country economics using relevant examples.

First of all, there are a lot of benefits of playing football from a young age such as promoting physical fitness, building confidence, encouraging socialization and so on.<sup>9</sup> In terms of promoting physical fitness, players are required to have endurance, agility, coordination and balance. When children play football with these skills repetitively in different situations, it will become natural and they can use these skills with better control over time. In terms of encouraging socialization, players need to communicate with their teammates, so children can learn how to communicate effectively. Football is a global sport, therefore, the range of players is wide (different culture and background), and it will be a great opportunity to expand children's sociability. On the other hand, there are some disadvantages to playing football from a young age. The biggest negative effect is that there is a potential of injury which can be serious injury which can affect daily life. According to the PMC, at least every three players are injured during a football season.<sup>10</sup> The most likely injury is thigh injury (median of boys : 25%, girls : 21%), and the most common injury type is muscle strain (boys : 31%, girls : 25%). Injury trends are

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<sup>7</sup> N80, "European football attendance trends; Comparing the big 5; Premier League, Bundesliga, Ligue 1, Serie A and La Liga", Row Z journeys around football, 2013

<sup>8</sup> Andrews, Matt, "Charting Football's Financial Growth", Football Focus, 2015

<sup>9</sup> Trace team, "Benefits of playing football for youth", Trace, year unknown

<sup>10</sup> Carvalho, M. Humberto, "Growth, maturation and injuries in high-level youth football (soccer): A mini review", PMC, 2022

depending on their age, adolescence and position related to peak height velocity (PHV). A real life example is Petr Cech's injury. He got injured on his head on 14th of October, 2006 against Reading in the English Premier League. He collided with Reading midfielder Stephen Hunt, and Hunt's knee hit Cech's head causing fracturing his skull (Fortunately, Cech backed Premier League in January with headgear which is his symbol).<sup>11</sup> This accident happened in the adult Premier League, but those injuries can happen in children's football matches and it would be life-threatening injury for children.

Secondly, football affects the economy of a country. According to the Premier League economic and social impact report, The Premier League and its clubs generated a direct tax contribution of £4.2billion to the UK Exchequer, of which £1.7billion was accounted for by the League's players and staff.<sup>12</sup> Additionally, according to the sports pro, for the 2022 to 2025 rights cycle, revenue from domestic broadcasters has accounted for 44 percent of the Premier League's total broadcast income, and more than half of its media rights revenue from international partners.<sup>13</sup> The football industry also supports over 100,000 jobs across the UK, ranging from stadium staff to broadcasting professionals, emphasizing its role in employment creation. Moreover, football has contributed to the local community, for example, Brighton and Hove Albion FC. "Brighton and Hove Albion FC contributed £595 million to the local economy during 2022/23, and this is 281% increase from 2019," said the Premier League report.<sup>14</sup> The overall impact shows how football's popularity drives significant economic growth and fosters regional development.

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<sup>11</sup> Chelsea FC, "Petr Cech column: Reflections on my head injury 15 years on", Chelsea FC, 2021

<sup>12</sup> Premier League, "Economic and social impact of Premier League highlighted by report", Premier League, 2024

<sup>13</sup> Harraghy, Daniel, "How the Premier League's global popularity is driving its revenue growth", SportsPro, 2024

<sup>14</sup> Premier League, "How Brighton contribute to local economy and community", Premier League, 2023

In conclusion, football has greatly impacted both society and the economy. While it offers numerous benefits like enhancing children's physical fitness and social skills, it also poses risks such as injuries, as seen in examples like Petr Čech's head injury. Additionally, football significantly boosts the economy, with the Premier League generating billions in tax revenue and contributing to local economies like Brighton's. Football's global popularity and its effects on individuals, communities, and nations make it not only a beloved sport but also a powerful force shaping various aspects of modern life. Therefore, football remains an influential and fascinating phenomenon. In my next essay I'll write about what sense of values have this impact.

### III

A lot of people have been fascinated by football over the centuries. According to the Federation Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) and SponsorUnited, 5 billion people have some interest in football<sup>15</sup>, and out of this fanbase, 3.5 billion people are counted as active supporters of football.<sup>16</sup> In my last essay, I wrote about the influence of football in terms of advantage and disadvantage and social economy. In this essay, I will write about why football fascinates a lot of people in the world.

One of the most powerful reasons why football fascinates people is the deep emotional connection that comes from supporting a team, especially when fans experience victories and defeats together, creating a shared sense of identity that goes beyond the sport itself. For many fans, supporting a football team is not just a hobby but a part of who they are, where the team's colors, songs, and history become deeply personal. Watching matches together with others, either in stadiums or at home, enhances this connection and creates a strong sense of belonging, similar to that of a family or local tribe. According to Psychology Today, shared emotional experiences

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<sup>15</sup> FIFA, "The football landscape", FIFA, year unknown

<sup>16</sup> SponsorUnited, "European Football Report 2022-23", SponsorUnited, 2023

like supporting the same team activate feelings of loyalty, trust, and unity—especially when everyone celebrates a goal or suffers a loss at the same time<sup>17</sup>. This collective energy, especially during big tournaments like the UEFA Champions League or World Cup, can make people feel like they're part of something much larger, as they cheer with millions of others around the world. In some countries, like Argentina or Germany, being a supporter of a club is seen as a cultural duty passed down from generation to generation, showing how football becomes tied to personal and national identity. Even for people who live far away from the clubs they support, watching matches online and engaging on social media lets them feel included and valued in a global community of fans.

Another reason why football captures people's attention is the complexity of what happens on the field—it's not just about the player who has the ball, but the entire system of movement, strategy, and anticipation happening all over the pitch. While casual viewers might focus only on the ball, experienced fans often watch how defenders position themselves, how attackers time their runs, and how midfielders control the rhythm of the game. This level of observation requires mental focus and gives fans a rewarding experience that changes with every match. According to *The Athletic*, football's depth lies in its off-the-ball intelligence, where players are constantly adjusting, covering spaces, or making deceptive runs even when they're not seen by the camera<sup>18</sup>. Managers like Pep Guardiola have often spoken about the importance of "positional play," which involves understanding spaces and teammates' locations to create the best passing options, making football like a live chess match. Fans who understand this enjoy watching formations shift, traps being set, and gaps being opened before a goal-scoring chance appears. This makes football enjoyable not just emotionally but intellectually, giving viewers

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<sup>17</sup> Zubernis, Lynn, "Why football fans get so emotional", *Psychology Today*, 2023

<sup>18</sup> O'Hanlon, Ryan, "How to watch soccer smarter: What to watch beyond the ball itself", *ESPN*, 2022

something new to learn and appreciate in each game. The joy comes not only when a goal is scored but also when one recognizes a brilliant through pass or a perfectly timed tackle that prevents danger—these moments create satisfaction and admiration even when the match ends without a goal.

In addition to the on-field strategy, football fascinates people because of the unpredictability and drama it often delivers—matches can change completely in the last few minutes, and this unpredictability makes every second thrilling. The psychological tension of “anything can happen” makes fans stay glued to the screen, because no lead is ever fully safe and no underdog is ever truly out. Famous moments like Liverpool’s comeback against Barcelona in the 2019 Champions League semi-final show how emotional and surprising football can be, and these moments stay in fans’ memories forever<sup>19</sup> (UEFA, 2019: *Liverpool's Historic Comeback*). Unlike some sports where scores tend to build gradually, football has a unique rhythm where a single moment can redefine everything. This sense of suspense makes fans nervous, excited, and hopeful all at the same time—an emotional roller coaster that few other sports can offer.

Furthermore, the personalities of players and managers play a huge role in attracting people to football. Supporters often feel emotionally connected to certain players whose journeys or playing styles reflect values like resilience, creativity, or loyalty. For instance, Lionel Messi is admired not just for his talent but for his calm personality, humility, and consistent dedication to both club and country, which inspires millions of people worldwide. On the other hand, passionate managers like Jürgen Klopp bring charisma and intensity to the sidelines, making fans feel like they’re watching a story unfold not just on the field but from the bench as well<sup>20</sup> (The

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<sup>19</sup> UEFA, “Greatest Champions League comebacks: La Remontada, Liverpool vs Barcelona, Paris vs Man United, Deportivo vs Milan”, UEFA, 2025

<sup>20</sup> Malik, Kenan, “Jürgen Klopp Brought Victories and Passion”, The Guardian, 2024

Guardian, 2024: *Jürgen Klopp Brought Victories and Passion*). These figures give football a human face—people relate to their struggles and celebrate their successes, adding a layer of narrative that goes beyond tactics and scorelines.

In conclusion, football's ability to fascinate people comes from more than just goals or trophies—it's a sport filled with emotional connection, intellectual strategy, unforgettable moments, and a global community. Supporting a team offers people a sense of identity and belonging, while watching matches brings not only entertainment but a way to learn about teamwork, tactics, and human drama. The game offers something for everyone—whether you're drawn in by the movement on the pitch, the storylines off the pitch, or the emotions that come with every kick. That is why football continues to hold the hearts of billions around the world.

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## English Learning

### I

Do you know how many percent of Japanese people can speak English properly? According to Rarejob online English conversation company, the percentage of Japanese who can speak English at a practical level is a standing “7%”<sup>1</sup>. Do you think this percentage is high? Or low? In fact, this percentage is very low on a global scale. According to a survey by EF Education First, Japan’s English proficiency ranked “87th out of 113 countries”<sup>2</sup>. The most English-speaking country where English is not the first language is the Netherlands, and 94% of the population can speak English practically. More than 77% of people in the Netherlands speak languages other than English and Dutch. Do you think Japan can call itself a “developed country” in this globalized world with this English language level? I think it can not be called a developed country. 7% is too small a percentage of English speakers to connect with the world. I think we need more English speakers in Japan. There are 7% English speakers, but not all of them will do the diplomat profession, so the number should be higher. In this essay I will explain why many Japanese do not speak English and why many Dutch speak English, using the differences in education between the two countries as a point of view.

Firstly, I will discuss why a lot of Japanese people can not speak English practically. Many Japanese do not speak English because they do not feel a need for their life. Many people do not have the opportunity to speak with foreigners in Japanese society, and even if they do,

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<sup>1</sup> Nihon Keizai Shimbun, “Only 7% of Japanese have a practical level of English conversation skills, according to a private survey,” Nihon Keizai Shimbun, 2024

<sup>2</sup> EF EPI, “EF English Proficiency Index Ranking of English Proficiency in 113 countries/regions worldwide,” EF EPI, 2023

they feel that they do not need to learn English because of the availability of translation apps<sup>3</sup>. The other reason is that Japanese students are not comfortable speaking English in English class. They are afraid that their English is wrong and do not want to be thought of as having bad pronunciation. Moreover, there are problems with English education in Japan. In Japan, English education begins from junior high school. It is too late for students to improve their English level. However in the Netherlands, most schools begin teaching English from the first grade of elementary school. Furthermore, to become a teacher in the Netherlands, students must have English proficiency at the B2 level on the CEFR, so all teachers have a high level of English proficiency, which inevitably increases the students English proficiency. Also, In the Netherlands, students can learn English through games, songs, and stories in a fun way, and since they are told to speak English actively from elementary school, they can all improve each other without worrying about mistakes.<sup>4</sup>

In conclusion, I think Japan should educate people like the Dutch. Japan's English education is too late compared to the Netherlands. Children grow by learning languages from an early age, but if you start late, they won't grow. Like I said in the beginning, Japan has 7% people that can use English fluently. This number is too small in the world. We need to increase the number of English speakers more and more to make Japan a better country. English will become more and more important in the world in the future<sup>5</sup>. Just by being able to speak English, a person's value will increase tremendously.. To do so, we need to change Japan's English education system at the root. So, changing English education in Japan will require changing Japan's educational system, which will be a difficult task, but by making the changes, the English

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<sup>3</sup> Kevin Burns, "7 Reasons Why Japanese Cannot Speak English," Speak Master, accessed 2024

<sup>4</sup> Reisuke, "94% of the population is bilingual! Why is Dutch English proficiency the highest among non-English speaking countries?," Rarejob EnglishLab, 2024

<sup>5</sup> Kentaro, "The Importance of English in Today's World," Preply, 2024

ability of Japanese people will surely improve, and the world will know that Japan is an English Speaking country.

## II

Do you think every Japanese person should learn English more than now in the future? In today's globalized world, English has become an essential skill not only for people around the world but also for Japanese individuals. English plays a crucial role in various aspects of life, such as business, education, and international travel. As we face increasing opportunities to connect with the global community, acquiring English skills can open doors to personal growth and new possibilities. In this essay, I will explore why learning English is important for Japanese people, focusing on its significance in international communication, access to information and knowledge, and career development in Japan. By understanding these points, we can gain a clearer perspective on the importance of English in our lives and how it can contribute to a brighter future.

Firstly, according to statistics from the Japan Tourism Agency of the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism, the number of foreign tourists visiting Japan is increasing every year.<sup>6</sup> As a result, there are more and more opportunities to respond in English at tourist attractions and restaurants. If the foreigner does not speak Japanese and uses a translator to communicate, the conversation may not go smoothly and the restaurant may become crowded. But what if the clerk could speak English? Not all foreigners can speak English, but a certain number of customers can be smoothly conversed with, and the crowding can be reduced a little. In other words, English speakers will become more and more necessary in Japan in the future. English is also important for Japanese companies expanding overseas. For example, many large

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<sup>6</sup> Japan Tourism Agency of the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism, "Number of foreign visitors to Japan and number of Japanese leaving Japan," Japan Tourism Agency of the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism, March 22, 2024

companies use English for international meetings and e-mails, and people who can handle this are also in demand.

Secondly, English is the primary language of the Internet and global media and is the key to discovering new information. For example, many popular YouTube videos, educational websites, and even travel guides are available in English. This means that English is being used everywhere in our daily lives. By learning English, we have easy access to reliable sources of information to help us learn new skills, plan trips abroad, and understand world events. Of the world's current population of approximately 7.3 billion people, 1.35 billion are said to be English speakers.<sup>7</sup> This means that approximately 20% of the world's population uses English. This means that there is inevitably a lot of English content on the Internet, and learning English is essential for understanding such content without difficulty. Thus, learning English will not only deepen our knowledge, but will also enrich our daily lives.

Thirdly, Rakuten and Uniqlo have English as the official language in the company. In recent years, an increasing number of Japanese companies, such as Rakuten and UNIQLO,<sup>8</sup> have made English their official internal language, and in some cases, TOEIC scores are used as criteria for promotion and employment. Rakuten has established a strict TOEIC score of 800 or above as a condition for entry into the company. Employees who have been with the company for a long time and have a TOEIC score of less than 800 will receive a pay cut. Foreign-affiliated companies and the tourism industry also tend to favor personnel with high English proficiency. For example, people who are fluent in English are more likely to get opportunities to interpret, translate, and get involved in international projects. This will help the person's demand to be evaluated and be eligible for a raise in salary. Especially in international projects, a person who

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<sup>7</sup> Gillan Ciara, "How many people speak English and where is it spoken?," Lingoda, November 8, 2022

<sup>8</sup> Masashi, "Summary of Japanese companies that use English as their official language," knowledge, August 04, 2022

can use English to communicate smoothly with overseas business partners and team members is indispensable to the organization. As a result, they are more likely to be promoted as well as appointed to new positions or leadership positions. In addition, English proficiency will lead to more responsibility, and your performance will be further recognized. In addition, approximately 75% of Japanese companies require English within their operations.<sup>9</sup> Thus, learning English is not just a matter of improving your skills; it is an important key to increasing your value and building a long-term, stable career.<sup>1011</sup>

In conclusion, as the world becomes increasingly connected, learning English is an important skill for Japanese people. Not only does it facilitate international communication in daily life and business, but as a powerful tool for accessing vast amounts of information and knowledge, English supports our personal and professional growth. Furthermore, English language skills are increasingly valued in the Japanese labor market and are key to career advancement and leadership positions. As Japan continues to globalize, the demand for English language skills will increase even further. By investing in English education and striving to continually improve your skills, you will open up new possibilities, adapt to a changing world, and contribute to a brighter future for people and society. Learning English is more than just learning a language; it is a step toward opening doors to endless opportunities and building a meaningful and fulfilling life in a globalized world.

### III

Many Japanese people tend to avoid speaking English. There are several reasons why this happens. Even though English is taught in schools for many years, many students are afraid of

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<sup>9</sup> Nihon University, "English Proficiency Required by Companies," Nihon University

<sup>10</sup> Live English, "English proficiency and annual income are proportional!," Live English, September 12, 2023

<sup>11</sup> ENGLEAD, "What are TOEIC scores related to promotion? Explanation of criteria and relationship with annual salary," ENGLEAD, August 25, 2024

making mistakes or feel embarrassed about their pronunciation.<sup>12</sup> In addition, they do not have many chances to use English in their daily lives, so they lack confidence.<sup>13</sup> However, in today's globalized world, being able to speak English is becoming more and more important for Japan. Therefore, we should think about how Japanese people can become more comfortable speaking English. In this essay, I will explain the reasons why Japanese people avoid speaking English and suggest ways to help them speak English more actively.

Firstly, growth comes from failure, so we should make many mistakes and learn from them. There is no success without failure, and there is no need to speak English perfectly from the beginning. We learn and improve by making mistakes, noticing them, and correcting them. To become fluent in English, it is important to let go of the mindset that sees mistakes as something shameful and instead view them as opportunities to improve and grow.<sup>14</sup> Additionally, eliminating the tendency of laughing at others' failures and dragging each other down would be effective.

Secondly, increasing your exposure to English and immersing yourself in it as much as possible is also effective. This can be done by talking to yourself in English, listening to native speakers on podcasts, reading news in English, and keeping an English diary. All four skills—speaking, listening, reading, and writing—are important for becoming fluent in English.<sup>15</sup> By making it a habit to engage with English every day, you can steadily improve. In addition,

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<sup>12</sup> Shiyu kan, "Why Are Japanese People Bad at English? - Proposals for English Education Reform: Submitted Opinion," Research Institute of Economy, Trade and Industry, 2002

<sup>13</sup> Minoru Kai, "Why Can't Japanese People Speak English? 4 Reasons Why They Can't Become Fluent," OGK International School, 2015

<sup>14</sup> ECC Foreign Language Institute, "How to Become Fluent in English? From 4 Key Points to Study Methods," ECC Foreign Language Institute

<sup>15</sup> ECC Foreign Language Institute, "How to Become Fluent in English? From 4 Key Points to Study Methods," ECC Foreign Language Institute

using what you learn from reading and listening through writing and speaking will help reinforce your knowledge.<sup>16</sup>

In conclusion, for Japanese people to speak English more confidently, it is essential to change both our mindset and daily habits. We should not be afraid of making mistakes, because failure is a natural and necessary part of learning. By creating an environment where mistakes are accepted and people do not laugh at others or drag each other down, more people will feel comfortable speaking English. In addition, increasing daily exposure to English through speaking, listening, reading, and writing can greatly improve fluency. If Japanese people practice English regularly and use it actively without fear, they will be able to communicate more freely with the world. These small but continuous efforts will help Japan become more open and connected in the global society.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Bizmates Blog, “How can I become fluent in English? I’ll show you the fastest route!,” Bizmates Blog, January 17, 2025

<sup>17</sup> Adelaide A, “The Importance of English in the Modern World,” Preply, May 19, 2025

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## Global Connections with English

### I

English is becoming increasingly important worldwide, serving as a common language that connects speakers of many languages. It's used in international conferences and is the official language of organizations like the United Nations and the International Olympic Committee. Global industries, such as aviation, also rely on English. As a result, demand for English education is rising globally.<sup>1</sup> The language English learning market is expanding and has an estimated reach of \$88.1 billion by 2031. However, some countries are cautious about the spread of English, focusing on preserving cultural identity and language. National attitudes towards English affect each society's unique economic, cultural, and educational priorities.

First, the countries that have strong international business connections or tourism industries tend to consider English as a resource for economic growth. For example, nations like Germany and the Netherlands place a high value on English proficiency, adopting it widely into their education system. In Germany and the Netherlands, many universities offer degree programs in English, providing a great environment for improving your English for academic and professional purposes.<sup>2</sup> As a result, the Netherlands was the first place in the ranking of EPI (English Proficiency Index) and Germany was 10th place in 2023. High levels of English-speaking ability allow people to work in international companies, study abroad, or communicate with global partners. English is a necessary skill for career advancement and national economic success.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/rise-english-language-learning-global-market-demand-s4fyf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.ef.com/assetscdn/WIBIwq6RdJvcD9bc8RMd/cefcom-epi-site/reports/2023/ef-epi-2023-english.pdf>

In contrast, some countries such as Japan and France consider the widespread adoption of English to be a caution. Looking at the details, France has strict laws to protect French as an official language. France introduced La Loi Toubon in 1994 to promote use of French in daily life and public places and, French is mandatory for public advertisements and product labeling. If a foreign language is used, a French translation must also be included. Also in Japanese school education, Japanese is the main language of education, and Japanese language classes are compulsory from elementary school through high school. English is taught as a required subject starting in junior high school, but Japanese is considered the primary language.<sup>3</sup> As a result, the EPI ranking of France is 43th and Japan is 87th out of 113 countries in 2023, a relatively low ranking. These systems not only protect the languages and identities of each country, but also enhance cultural branding and promote the development of industries such as tourism and product sales. Moreover, By protecting their languages, France and Japan assert cultural uniqueness on the global stage, strengthening their distinct positions and emphasizing national identity in international relations.

Lastly, English education is getting important in developing countries like South eastern countries and African countries. For instance, Indonesia is trying to eliminate the gap between the rich and the poor in urban and rural areas by providing English education to expand career opportunities. Also in other South eastern countries and African countries, the spread of English education is seen as a key to accessing international job markets and attracting foreign investments. Mastering English opens up economic opportunities and strengthens global connections.

In conclusion, English has become a key language globally, impacting economies, cultures, and education systems. Countries like Germany and the Netherlands value English for

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.ef.com/assetscdn/WIBIwq6RdJvcD9bc8RMd/cefcom-epi-site/reports/2023/ef-epi-2023-english.pdf>

boosting business and international connections, while France and Japan are more cautious, focusing on protecting their languages and cultures. In developing regions, such as Southeast Asia and Africa, English education is seen as a way to create more economic opportunities and attract foreign investments. Each country's approach to English reflects its own priorities in balancing global involvement with cultural preservation.

## II

Recently, English is considered as an important tool for stepping up careers and getting an opportunity to get hired in the world. It serves as a common language for international communication and is important for trading, technological research, and aviation. For instance, countries like Germany and the Netherlands use English to push economic growth, while developing nations see it as a path to job opportunities and foreign investments. However, some countries in the world do not commit to English education very much. This approach can lead to both advantages and disadvantages in terms of global participation and economic opportunities. In this essay, I am going to research the reason why they do not put effort into learning English and what it causes.

Looking at the ranking of EPI (English Proficiency Index)<sup>4</sup>, a lot of low ranking countries are in Africa, Central Asia, and The Middle East. In these countries, there are some problems with education. According to UNESCO and WFP<sup>5</sup> 15 million children in Middle East and North Africa (MENA) are put out of school, and it is expected to increase by a further five million by 2030. In other words, the environment is not conducive to children receiving an adequate education in the first place. In countries that speak Arabic like Syria, Sudan, and Jordan

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<sup>4</sup> EF Education First, "EF English Proficiency Index 2023", unknown, 2023, December 23, 2024

<sup>5</sup> UNESCO, *Millions of children in Middle East and North Africa are missing out on education*, UNESCO and WFP say, n.a., 2023, April 5, 2024

introduce Arabicization<sup>6</sup> to higher education. Arabicization means the gradual change of a culture into one that incorporates Arab culture and/or speaks Arabic. The purpose of introducing this is preserving the Arabic language because they believe that the Arabic language is gradually declining, which could put people's literacy at risk. In addition, some see the Englishization of higher education as a policy that marginalizes Arabic as an academic language and marginalizes Arab cultural and Islamic identity. For these reasons, these countries do not commit to English education like Europe and other advanced English education countries.

Because of these facts, countries that do not have high English proficiency are facing some problems. For instance, in Malawi which is a country in Africa, the medical issues are being considered a problem. Currently, people are not able to get enough medical service in this country. This is because of the lack of development of medical research in that country's language, so medical professionals need to understand records written in English, but their poor English makes it difficult for them to understand, resulting in stagnation of the quality of medical care. In addition, poor English skills make it hard to work with other countries in the Middle East. Limited English creates communication problems with global partners and blocks teamwork on projects. For example, in Saudi Arabia, poor English skills among students and professionals have slowed down international cooperation in renewable energy. The country is trying to diversify its economy and invest in renewable energy, but the lack of English skills makes it hard for Saudi engineers and researchers to work with international experts. This language barrier delays the sharing of knowledge and technology, limiting progress in renewable energy projects. This language gap means the region misses out on international funds and resources and becomes isolated from global knowledge networks. As a result, poor English skills

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<sup>6</sup> PMC (National Library of Medicine), *The impact of English proficiency on healthcare outcomes in non-native speakers*, Mbatha, T., 2023, April 5, 2024

hurt economic growth and development and make it difficult to solve regional issues through international partnerships.

In conclusion, English is an important tool for communication and economic growth, but some countries in Africa, Central Asia, and the Middle East struggle to focus on learning it. Problems like weak education systems, efforts to protect their own languages, and concerns about losing their culture make it hard to prioritize English. However, not learning English causes issues like poor medical care in Malawi and delays in renewable energy projects in Saudi Arabia. To solve these problems, countries need to find a balance between keeping their culture and learning English. By improving English education, they can connect with the world and create more opportunities for growth and success.

### III

English is becoming a more crucial tool in today's globalized world and is used in multiple fields like international communication, businesses, education and more. It is not only the official language of international organizations like the United Nations and the International Olympic Committee (IOC) but also an important method of communication in industries such as aviation, technology, and diplomacy. Therefore, many countries have recognized the importance of English and are trying to enhance English education. However, some countries are struggling with English education and it leads to low English proficiency especially in Africa, Central Asia, and the Middle East. This is due to reasons, such as low quality of education, cultural resistance to foreign languages and policies that protect national identity. These problems can lead to serious consequences including missed economic opportunities and challenges in global collaboration.

One of the biggest problems caused by low English proficiency is the difficulty of participation in the global community and accessing international opportunities. In some countries like Africa, Central Asia, and the Middle East, people find learning English hard because of the poor education system and cultural concerns about foreign language dominance. According to UNESCO, around 15 million children in the Middle East and North Africa are not able to go to school and it is expected to get worse in the future. Without the high quality of education, it is almost impossible to enhance sufficient English skills. The lack of proficiency limits their ability to get a job in global companies, apply for international scholarships and more important opportunities.

Another serious problem is the English barrier to the scientific and medical field. For example, in countries like Malawi which is located in Africa, English is not used commonly, and medical professionals are in trouble understanding records written in English. It leads to low quality of healthcare and treatment. In Saudi Arabia, poor English skills among engineers and researchers have made it difficult to cooperate with international experts for renewable energy projects. This language barrier delays the transfer of knowledge and weakens the country's ability to develop a new technology. In both cases, lack of quality of the English education system and people's communication ability in English prevent professionals from the international community which limits international relationships and economic growth.

Some countries have already introduced effective programs to improve English proficiency. For example, in South Korea, they started a program called EPIK in 1995 placing native English speaking teachers in public schools to help students and local teachers improve their abilities through real communication.<sup>7</sup> As of 2004, South Korea was ranked 93 place but in

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<sup>7</sup> EF Education First, "EF English Proficiency Index 2023", unknown, 2023, December 23, 2024

2011, it was improved to 72 place by the program.<sup>8</sup> Another example, Chile introduced “English Opens Doors Program” in 2003 that aimed to enhance the quality of English education by training teachers, providing teaching materials, and running English Language camps. Chile has made efforts to improve English education, but the results show fluctuations.<sup>9</sup> For example, its EF EPI ranking was 36th in 2015, dropped to 45th in 2017, and further to 52nd in 2023. This suggests that while access to English education has expanded, issues such as education quality and regional gaps still remain. Therefore, continuous improvement is necessary for the long term. Overall, these cases indicate that English education reform is a slow but meaningful step, and sustained commitment is crucial for long-term success.

In conclusion, English proficiency is one of the most significant factors for connecting with other countries and involving international opportunities, business. Moreover, it is necessary to provide high quality healthcare. Countries that have low English proficiency tend to face a barrier to economic growth, international collaboration and technology improvement. However, examples above such as South Korea and Chile have introduced programs to enhance English level in the countries and are taking efforts. They show that with good policies and continuous effort, countries can improve their English skills and increase a role in the global community. I believe that if the world gets closer to each other, English will stay as a foundation for future opportunities.

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<sup>8</sup> ICEF Monitor, *Chile continues to push for improved English proficiency*, ICEF Monitor Team, 2016, April 5, 2024

<sup>9</sup> EF Education First, “EF English Proficiency Index 2023”, unknown, 2023, December 23, 2024

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## The relationship between the advantages of Japanese education and school refusal

### I

In recent years, the number of students who refuse going to school has increased in Japan. According to the Ministry of Education, students who are not attending school have been increasing year by year. About 350,000 in 2023, an increase of about 50 (16%) from the previous year of non-attendance.<sup>1</sup> This issue is related to too much pressure and stress that students feel in the education system. Japanese education focuses on improving academic skills and discipline, but strict rules and the pressure to fit in can also cause problems. In this essay, the strengths of the Japanese education system and the negatives of the strengths will be discussed.

Firstly, Japanese schools have discipline and respect as rules. It is helpful for several points. The first one is developing responsibility. The strict discipline in Japanese schools helps students develop habits like being punctual, organized and responsible, which are valuable throughout their lives, especially in the workplace. The second one is building character. Learning to respect authority, rules, and other hallmarks create a sense of respect and maturity. These students are more likely to contribute positively to society and work well in group settings. The third one is creating a stable environment. A disciplined environment makes the classroom a place where students can focus on learning without distractions leading to better educational outcomes. Students clean their classroom by themselves. It is helpful for responsibility and learning the importance of cleaning. Secondly, Japanese schools have high academic standards. It is helpful for academic success. High standards ensure that students have a strong academic foundation, which is critical for future education and career opportunities. Students are

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<sup>1</sup> Ito, Humie. "Problem Behavior and Truancy Survey" Ministry of Education, 2024.

well-prepared for the demands of university and professional life. Also it is helpful for building problem-solving skills. The strong focus on math, science, and reading develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills, which are useful not only in school but in everyday life and work situations. Thirdly, Japanese schools have teamwork and cooperation. It is helpful for some points. The first one is social skills. The emphasis on working in groups helps students develop strong communication, collaboration, and interpersonal skills, which are essential in both personal and professional relationships. The second one is teamwork in the workplace. Many careers require employees to work together in teams. Students who learn teamwork in school are better prepared for the collaborative environments of many workplaces. The third one is building empathy. Working with others in different contexts teaches students empathy and understanding, helping them navigate diverse social situations in adulthood. These strengths of discipline, academic rigor, and teamwork provide a foundation for students to succeed both in school and in later life. They help students become responsible, well-rounded individuals who can handle challenges, work well with others, and contribute positively to society. On the other hand, these strengths can lead to weakness occasionally.

Firstly, the strong emphasis on discipline and strict rules can feel overwhelming for some students, especially those who feel anxious or struggle with authority. While learning to follow rules is important, some students may feel they can not keep up with high expectations or fear making mistakes. This pressure can lead to anxiety and a desire to avoid school, as they feel they are constantly under scrutiny. The Ministry of Education says that about 81% of junior high school students, and about 85% of high school students feel cramped at school.<sup>2</sup> For students who find the rigid structure stressful, avoiding school can feel like a way to escape this constant

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<sup>2</sup> Ministry of Education, “Student fears and concerns”, 2023.

pressure. Also Japanese schools have strict rules and high expectations, including rules about appearance. For example, about 80% of high schools do not allow makeup.<sup>3</sup> Many schools do not allow accessories that are seen as “unusual”. In Japan, where appearance often matters a lot socially, these rules can make students feel uncomfortable or restricted. Students who may feel insecure about their natural appearance sometimes rely on makeup to feel confident. Research has shown that the psychological effects of makeup include increased positivity, relaxation and unwinding, increased mood elevation such as motivation and cheerfulness, and an increased sense of security. Makeup has also been reported to reduce fatigue.<sup>4</sup> When this option is taken away, some students may feel anxious or even face bullying from peers leading them to avoid school. For students who feel overwhelmed by strict rules and expectations school refusal can feel like the only way to escape the constant pressure. Secondly, the high academic standards in Japanese schools can lead to intense pressure to succeed, which students often feel that their grades and test scores define their future. According to a survey by the Japanese Red Cross Society, about 50% of high school students experience anxiety over the possibility of falling or not meeting the high expectations set by teachers, parents, or even themselves.<sup>5</sup> This pressure can become overwhelming, and for students who feel they are not able to keep up academically, avoiding school becomes a way to escape the stress and fear of failure. Thirdly, while cooperation is valuable, it can create challenges for students who struggle with social situations or who feel they do not fit in. Japanese schools often emphasize group harmony and cooperation, which can make students feel isolated if they do not naturally align with the group. For students who are introverted, socially anxious, or feel they are different from their peers, this focus on

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<sup>3</sup> High School Student Newspaper, “Makeup hemorrhoids in high school”, 2022.

<sup>4</sup> Eriko Moriuchi, Osamu Hirose, Satoru Nakata, Junko Kobe, “The effect of biophylactic function on psychological impact of makeup” CORE, 2006.

<sup>5</sup> Japanese Red Cross Society, “Half of young people feel lethargic, not waiting to do anything. One in three is concerned about the impact on relationship building and interpersonal skills” Japanese Red Cross Society, 2022.

fitting in can feel intimidating. As a result, some students may choose to avoid school rather than face the daily pressure to conform socially.

In conclusion, while the Japanese education system provides a strong foundation in discipline, academic standards, and teamwork, it also creates significant pressure for some students. The strict rules, high expectations, and emphasis on fitting in can lead to stress, anxiety, and even school avoidance for those who feel they can not keep up. Change is difficult. I think that Japan especially struggles with change. However, by adapting more flexibly, schools might be able to become a more comfortable place for children.

## II

In the previous essay, the characteristics of Japanese school education and its advantages and disadvantages were discussed. According to the Novak Djokovic Foundation, about 85% of students in Japan feel school is fun<sup>6</sup>. Also in Canada about 89% of students feel school is fun.<sup>7</sup> This essay will discuss how the characteristics of the Canadian school system differ from those of Japan, and outline the merits and demerits of each characteristic.

Firstly, strict rules and regulations are not common in Canadian schools like in Japan. Students are free to dress and wear their hair as they wish, and there are few dress codes required by schools. Also students do not clean school by themselves. Cleaning activities are often handled by full- time staff.<sup>8</sup> This liberal environment is rooted in a Canadian educational philosophy that emphasizes student creativity and self- expression.<sup>9</sup> In addition, this free environment is because Canada has accepted many refugees and many people who have different

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<sup>6</sup> Novak Djokovic Foundation, “Interesting facts about Japanese school system” Novak Djokovic Foundation, 2015

<sup>7</sup> Statistics Canada “Elementary-Secondary education survey” Statistics Canada, 2024

<sup>8</sup> One Source, Inc “How to decide if students should clean their schools” One Source, Inc, 2023

<sup>9</sup> Thomas Fleming, “Canadian school policy in liberal and post-liberal eras: historical perspective on the changing social context of schooling, 1846-1990” Taylor & Francis online, 2006

backgrounds live in Canada<sup>10</sup>. The benefit is that students can express themselves and emphasize individuality. According to the University of Toronto, liberal educational environment has the effect of increasing a student's self-esteem.<sup>11</sup> More than 70% of students participating in the survey indicated that the liberal school environment in which they could value their own identity and developed social confidence. It has been suggested that free self-expression contributes to students' social and future occupational skills.

Secondly, Japanese schools have high academic standards which is helpful for academic success. However, the Canadian education system values students' individuality and diverse talents more than basic academic skills, and students learn through project-based learning and practical assignments.<sup>12</sup> In Canada, projects are important and make up more than 50% of the final grade, not just tests.<sup>13</sup> This can allow students to improve their problem-solving and collaboration skills through practical learning. According to a study of group projects conducted at one Canadian secondary school, 86% of students who engaged in the project based learning indicated that their “problem-solving” skills improved.<sup>14</sup> This education system can improve student's ability to respond flexibly to the challenges they face in society. Also Canada tends to emphasize critical thinking and creativity as “21st century skills” which have a positive impact on future career choices<sup>15</sup>.

Thirdly, Canadian schools emphasize teamwork and cooperation as Japanese schools do. Especially through group projects and discussions to foster communication skills and collaboration skills. A study conducted in Vancouver found that student's social skills improved

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<sup>10</sup> Kalyn Belsha “State and cities are banning hair discrimination. Here is how that is affecting schools” CHALKBEAT,2020

<sup>11</sup> Kususanto Ditto Prihadi, “Students’ Self-Esteem at school” Research Gate, 2012

<sup>12</sup> Diversity Votes, “The canadian education system: Excellence and opportunities” Diversity Votes, year unknown

<sup>13</sup> Diversity Votes, “The canadian education system: Excellence and opportunities” Diversity Votes, year unknown

<sup>14</sup> Ebrahim Karan, and Lisa Brown “Enhancing Student’s Problem-solving Skills through Project-based Learning” Journal of problem based learning in high education, 2022

<sup>15</sup> Tara Ehrcke, “21st Century learning inc”, Tara Ehrcke, year unknown

through group work. 78% of students surveyed said that working with others helps them academically and has a positive impact on their relationship when they enter the workplace<sup>16</sup>. Students develop skills that will be useful in the workplace by emphasizing teamwork. In fact, according to the Business Council of Canada 2022 survey, Canadian employers also cite “the ability to cooperate in a team” as the most important factor.<sup>17</sup> Learning in a cooperative environment enhances social skills and emotional intelligence, and has a positive impact on future professional life.

On the other hand, these features and benefits have disadvantages. Firstly, an environment that is too free has its disadvantages. Too much freedom can lead to students's lack of discipline and a disrupted learning environment. The Canadian Education Association reported that 25% of students are repeatedly late or absent in environments with too much freedom. Lax discipline may make it difficult to develop a sense of responsibility for learning, especially in a group setting, and may disrupt the learning environment.

Secondly, there is a risk that academic skills may be lacking at the basic level. Because Canada places less emphasis on basic subjects such as math and science than Japan, and they are not based on academic education. The gap in academic achievement may widen. For example, according to the OECD's PISA survey, Canada's academic achievement level is above the global average, but it has decreased,<sup>18</sup> especially in mathematics, highlighting the challenges in basic academic skills.<sup>19</sup> This result indicates that the Canadian education system is not necessarily strengthening basic academic skills equally for all students.

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<sup>16</sup> Keijiro Kumagai and Shigeru Kawamura, “a study on student’s attitudes towards collaborative learning” the national education association, 2020

<sup>17</sup> Business Council of Canada, “Empowering people for recovery and Growth 2022 Skills Survey Report” Business Council of Canada, 2022

<sup>18</sup> OECD, “PISA 2022 Results-country notes Canada” OECD, 2023

<sup>19</sup> cmec, “Measuring Up: Canadian Results of the OECD PISA 2022 Study” cmec, 2022

Thirdly, too much emphasis on cooperation may lead to a neglect of individual opinions and contributions. Especially in group projects, individual efforts may not be fully appreciated and may result in dependence on other members. According to the Canadian Education Association in 2023, 40% of students reported that they felt their group contributions were unfair.<sup>20</sup> This may lead to student dissatisfaction and distrust, which may diminish the effectiveness of cooperative learning.

Overall, the Canadian educational system respects individuality and provides freedom of learning to enhance students' creativity and social skills. On the other hand, the educational system can lead to problems such as lack of discipline and poor basic academic skills. Just as there is a flip side to everything, no matter how much we change the educational system to be more effective, there will always be some disadvantages. Humanity will continue to search for the answer to this question, a place where all students can learn in a relaxed atmosphere.

### III

According to UNESCO, 258 million children around the world do not go to school right now.<sup>21</sup> In addition, among the children who can go to school, about 56% do not have basic reading skills, and about 62% do not have basic math skills.<sup>22</sup> If this education gap continues, poverty and social inequality may increase in the future. Education is important not only for changing a person's life but also for helping the whole society grow. However, the current education system does not fully support each student's ability and differences, and it has many problems. The ideal education system gives all students equal learning opportunities while helping them develop their unique skills and grow individually. In this essay, three important

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<sup>20</sup> Marilyn Ford and Jenny Morice, "How fair are group assignments? A survey of students and faculty and a modest proposal" *Journal of information technology education*, 2003

<sup>21</sup> UNESCO, "250 million children out of school: What you need to know about UNESCO's latest education data", UNESCO, 2023

<sup>22</sup> United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, "More Than One-Half of Children and Adolescents Are Not Learning Worldwide", United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2017

elements of personalized learning, use of technology, and promotion of social equity will be discussed. Also how these elements contribute to achieving ideal education will be explored.

To begin, at the heart of ideal education is personalized learning that fits each student. The current one-size-fits-all teaching method makes it difficult to meet individual needs, leaving many students behind. For example, about 40% of students feel they are not receiving instruction that matches their learning style.<sup>23</sup> To solve this problem, it is effective to introduce personalized tutoring using AI and data analysis. AI can provide the best materials and assignments based on a student's learning progress and interest. Moreover by creating an environment where students can learn at their own pace, their motivation to study improves. In fact, schools that implemented personalized learning saw average test scores rise by about 15% compared to traditional education.<sup>24</sup> Additionally, teachers can better understand student's personalities and needs, leading to stronger trust between students and teachers.

Next, using technology is an essential factor in achieving an ideal education. Currently, about 35% of children around the world can not access the internet<sup>25</sup>, and this digital divide is making educational inequality worse. By using technology, students in areas with limited learning opportunities can have equal access to education. For example, online education platforms and digital materials can provide high-quality education to students in remote areas or low-income communities. Furthermore, with virtual reality and augmented reality, students can experience nature and culture from distant locations without leaving the classroom. Science experiments and historical simulations can be done in virtual spaces, helping students learn in a more hands-on way. For instance, in an international program, 70% of students who joined

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<sup>23</sup> Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, "Teacher's reports on Managing Classroom Behaviors", OECD, 2021

<sup>24</sup> The Rand corporation, "Continues Progress Promising Evidence on Personalized Learning", John F. Pane, Elizabeth D. Steiner, Matthew D. Baird, and Laura S. Hamilton, 2015 (Web. November 10)

<sup>25</sup> World Economic Forum, "These are the places in the world where internet access is still an issue and why", Douglas Broom, 2023 (Web. September 5)

lessons using VR technology said they had a more memorable learning experience.<sup>26</sup> In this way, technology improves the quality of education while also creating a path to educational equality.

Lastly, ideal education must provide equal learning opportunities for all students. Currently, about 20% of students around the world are forced to stop their education due to financial reasons.<sup>27</sup> In particular, the lack of educational opportunities in low-income communities and underdeveloped regions leads to a cycle of poverty. To solve this issue, it is important to introduce free education, scholarship programs, and inclusive education models. Their systems allow all students to continue learning without financial worries. Additionally, inclusive education ensures equal learning opportunities for students with disabilities and those from diverse language backgrounds. These efforts help the whole society benefit from education and promote the development of a more diverse and sustainable community.

In conclusion, ideal education provides an environment where all students can learn and grow in their own way. In this essay, three key elements-personalized learning, use of technologies, and promotion of social equity were discussed. By implementing these elements, we can expect improvements in academic performance and a reduction in social inequality.

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<sup>26</sup> MDPI, “Virtual Reality, Augmented Reality, and Mixed Reality in Experiential Learning: Transforming Educational Paradigms”, Horace T. Crogman, Victor D. Cano, Edlyn Pacheco, Rohan B. Sonawane, and Reza Broom, 2025 (Web. February 28)

<sup>27</sup> UNICEF, “Children from the poorest households benefit the least from national public education funding”, Sara Alhattab, 2023 (Web. January 16)

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## Study abroad and personal growth

### I

According to UNESCO, 2.2 million students studied abroad in 2001, that number has climbed to 6.39 million students in 2021, and China has the highest number of students studying overseas with more than 1 million students in 2021.<sup>1</sup> Over the last several years, with the development of the economy, an increasing number of families have been sending their children to study abroad. 42% of parents would consider sending their children abroad to study, which shows a significant increase from 35% in 2016.<sup>2</sup> Most people believe that studying abroad can bring students many benefits, while others think that students should finish university education in their country. This essay will mainly focus on the relationship between studying abroad and personal growth, and discuss why studying abroad can bring us countless benefits.

One of the biggest impacts that will directly affect our future is that we can gain the ability to learn to observe the world and today's society from different perspectives. In the process of expanding our horizons, the first thing we need to do is to break stereotypes. When people adapt to a new environment, understand political and social systems, and communicate with people from various countries, they will learn about different customs, cultures, beliefs, and values.<sup>3</sup> Through these, we can understand their perspectives, appreciate their unique way of life, and thus break down stereotypes. During studying abroad, we need to step out of our comfort

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<sup>1</sup> Anna Fleck, "The Countries With The Most Students Studying Abroad," Statista, May 7 2024

<sup>2</sup> Sonja, "More parents want their children to study abroad – here's why," Global site, date unknown

<sup>3</sup> Super Admin, "Sociology Superpowers: How Studying Abroad Enhances Your Understanding of Human Interactions," The edu network, January 31 2024

zone and confront our biases and assumptions. The process of adaptation may feel uncomfortable, but it can bring personal growth and a broader perspective.<sup>4</sup>

Another benefit of studying abroad is learning to be independent. Being away from your hometown, family, and familiar environment and arriving in a foreign country can encourage self-reliance and personal growth. In a foreign country, when encountering problems, we need to solve them only by ourselves, not like we are at home and just ask our parents to help us. However, as long as we master ways to promote personal growth, we will find that independence can be exercised quickly.<sup>5</sup> For example, we can first learn the local language because when there is a problem and have to communicate with others, we must have a common language to quickly solve it.<sup>6</sup>

Also, through studying abroad, we can gain a clear understanding of the most authentic of a country. Sometimes what you hear from others may not be right, and it might not be the entirety of something. The same goes for a country. Learn the history of a country, get along with the local people, observe every detail about the country with your own eyes, discard all the knowledge you knew before coming to this country, and start from scratch to understand this country.<sup>7</sup> These methods can quickly and accurately help us see and understand a country. Everything can only be truly understood if we have experienced it.

The above is the benefit of studying overseas. It is quite understandable that people from different backgrounds have different opinions on the same issue. However, I think that studying abroad is not only for learning knowledge or experiencing life, but more importantly, it broadens

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<sup>4</sup> KIA Consultant, "Breaking Stereotypes: How Studying Abroad Can Challenge Your Perspectives," KIA Consultant, May 27 2024

<sup>5</sup> Kingston University London, "7 reasons why studying abroad will change your life," Kingston University London, September 11 2023

<sup>6</sup> Study in Switzerland, "5 Ways to Become More Independent While Studying Abroad," Study in Switzerland, date unknown

<sup>7</sup> Kings, "The top 10 benefits of studying abroad [2024]," Kings, June 11 2024

our horizons and inspires independence by interacting and communicating with people from different countries, cultures, and races. It also helps us gain a clear understanding of the true face of a country. Therefore, I believe that although we will encounter unknown challenges and difficulties during the process, it will bring us endless rewards in the end. In the future, I will probably be grateful for choosing to study abroad and persevering.

## II

Globally, one in seven 10-19 year-olds experiences a mental illness, accounting for 15% of the global burden of disease in this age group.<sup>8</sup> Most people believe that studying abroad is a life-changing opportunity, where students can explore and learn about new cultures, gain an international perspective, and enhance their academic and career prospects. However, it is not without challenges, and one of the most concerning issues is mental issues, especially depression. While studying abroad may be a great experience for students, it may lead to unique challenges to mental health. Student stress can come from various sources, such as academic pressure, social and environmental factors, external pressure, and personal factors.<sup>9</sup> This essay will focus on the relationship between studying abroad and depression among Asian students and analyse the factors that lead to this mental health problem in cultural, academic and discrimination areas.

One main cause is the cultural adaptation issues. Cultural differences are not just about language but also include social norms, values, and daily practices. International students may find themselves uncomfortable adapting to these new cultures, leading to the feeling of losing direction and loneliness. For example, in some Western countries, individualism is prevalent and people value personal space and independence more. However, in Eastern cultures, collectivism

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<sup>8</sup> WHO, "Mental health of adolescents," WHO, October 10 2024

<sup>9</sup> 11 Common Causes of School Stress For Students | Oxford Learning

is taken more seriously and people emphasise teamwork and harmony with each other.<sup>10</sup> The excitement and curiosity about a new culture may quickly give way to anxiety and homesickness.<sup>11</sup> In addition, cultural differences in diet can also cause discomfort to international students. Some students may lose their appetite because they cannot find food that suits their taste, which can also affect their mood and physical health.<sup>12</sup>

Another cause is academic pressure. In many Asian cultures, educational achievement and success are highly valued. Parents, teachers and society often place high expectations on children, hoping they will excel in their studies and future careers.<sup>13</sup> This cultural background creates children's responsibility and ambition from an early age. However, when students cannot achieve their high expectations, they might start doubting themselves. They may question their abilities and feel like they are not performing as well as they could.<sup>14</sup> They are also afraid of being disappointed by others. They are scared of disappointing their parents, teachers and themselves, which increases their psychological burden. Many Asian students have a strong sense of responsibility and feel that they should meet the expectations of others. So when they fail to meet these expectations, they feel guilty and ashamed.<sup>15</sup>

The last cause of depression is discrimination. In a new environment, it is difficult for international students to integrate into the local social circle due to language and cultural differences. This social isolation will increase their loneliness and helplessness, leading to

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<sup>10</sup> Eastern VS Western Cultures - The Migration Translators

<sup>11</sup> Students' functioning while studying abroad: The impact of psychological distress and loneliness - ScienceDirect

<sup>12</sup> The relationship between diet/nutrition and the mental health of immigrants in Western societies through a holistic bio-psycho-socio-cultural lens: A scoping review - PubMed

<sup>13</sup> Impact of Cultural Perceptions of Education on Mental Health Outcomes Among Asian and Asian-American Students

<sup>14</sup> ED10a - Ethnicity and External Factors / ED10 - Ethnicity and Educational Achievement / Education / SOCIOLOGY SUPPORT | Hectic Teacher Resources

<sup>15</sup> Impact of Cultural Perceptions of Education on Mental Health Outcomes Among Asian and Asian-American Students

depression. International students may also encounter racial and cultural prejudice. This prejudice may not necessarily come from people around them, such as teachers or classmates, but also from other members of society. This discrimination can make them feel unwelcome and marginalised, seriously affecting their self-esteem and sense of belonging. Another negative impact of cultural prejudice on international students is that some locals may be prejudiced against the culture and lifestyle of international students, which will make international students feel excluded.<sup>16</sup>

The above is an essay about the relationship between studying abroad and depression among Asian international students. One thing that cannot be denied is that studying abroad does give us many opportunities to grow and learn. However, it is not without challenges. If you are not mentally prepared before going abroad, studying abroad may become a painful experience. The pressure you have to bear during studying abroad may be more than twice as much as usual. There are academic pressures, cultural differences, discrimination and prejudice, fear of failure, and family expectations. During this period, the willpower of international students can be easily broken. They will begin to doubt themselves, lose confidence and patience, and even start to hate themselves, and then slowly become confused. So before making any decision, you must not only observe its bright and beautiful side, but also understand its dark side. The same is true for studying abroad, so being mentally prepared before going abroad is a key step to avoid falling into these bad influences. Studying abroad can be an important turning point in life, but not everyone can suddenly see the light and find the right path for themselves through studying abroad. Only those who have enough confidence in themselves can successfully find their future path through studying abroad.

### III

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<sup>16</sup> How students can overcome the language barrier in the UK, AHZ, 2024

Today, more and more people choose to study in a foreign country. According to global data, over six million students leave their home countries for education each year. They do this to get a better education, experience a different way of life, and improve their chances for a good job in the future. While studying abroad comes with challenges, like feeling homesick, facing a language barrier, or adapting to new teaching styles, the long-term positive effects are significant. This journey does more than just give someone a degree; it changes a person in deep and important ways, building skills that are highly valuable in today's world. This essay will look at two key benefits: learning how to communicate well with people from different cultures, and developing a strong ability to solve problems independently.

One of the most clear and lasting benefits of studying abroad is the growth in cross-cultural skills. Living every day in a new country is like a constant, real-life lesson in communication. A student has to learn much more than just new words. They must understand the unspoken rules: what gestures mean, common social habits, and how people view things like time, authority, or teamwork. For example, a student used to speaking very directly might learn to appreciate and use a more indirect way of giving feedback, which is common in some cultures, during class discussions or group work. This daily practice in understanding others goes far beyond book knowledge. It builds real empathy—the ability to see things from another person's point of view. This skill is very useful for a future career. In our connected world, the ability to work with people from different backgrounds is priceless. Someone who has studied abroad is often better at managing diverse teams, working with international clients, and creating projects that make sense to people everywhere. They learn to see cultural differences not as problems, but as chances to get new ideas. This understanding helps prevent mistakes and builds

stronger, more trusting working relationships. It makes these individuals effective team players and sought-after employees in any field that has a global connection.

Another major benefit is that studying abroad is a powerful training ground for self-reliance. Away from the familiar support of family and old friends, students have to handle everything themselves. They face all kinds of unexpected problems: dealing with complicated paperwork for a visa or bank account, handling an illness alone, or simply figuring out how to use public transport in a foreign language. Every time they solve one of these problems—whether it's fixing a misunderstanding with a landlord or finding new resources for a school project—they become stronger and more confident. This environment forces students to be proactive. They can't just wait for help; they must look for information, make choices, and take responsibility for the results. For instance, if a teaching or testing style is unfamiliar, the student must actively ask the professor for advice, form study groups with classmates, and find new ways to learn. This process is like "leveling up" in a game. With each challenge overcome, their belief in their own abilities grows. They learn that they can handle uncertainty and stress. This "I can do it" attitude and problem-solving skill last a lifetime. It prepares them to face future difficulties in their careers or personal lives with a calmer, more determined, and creative mind.

In summary, studying abroad leads to positive changes that are much greater than just earning a diploma. It builds two crucial sets of skills in a practical way: the ability to communicate and connect across cultures, and the strength to solve problems and adapt independently. These are not just ideas; they are real abilities shaped by daily life in a new place. Looking ahead, this combination provides a strong foundation for future success. In their professional life, such individuals are well-prepared to work in international settings, lead mixed teams with understanding, and come up with ideas that combine different viewpoints. In their

personal life, the resilience and self-knowledge they gain help them navigate life's ups and downs with more confidence and flexibility. Ultimately, the positive effects of studying abroad give a person more than a qualification. They provide a practical toolkit for living, working, and contributing meaningfully in a global world, enabling a more capable and fulfilling life.

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## How Japanese Students Can Break Barriers Abroad

### I

Studying abroad is a valuable opportunity that can broaden one's horizons, but many Japanese students face significant challenges when adjusting to life in an English-speaking country.<sup>1</sup> These difficulties often stem from low self-confidence, a lack of knowledge about their own country, and struggles in socializing with others.<sup>2</sup> In this essay, I will explore these problems and offer solutions to help Japanese students succeed in their study abroad experience.<sup>3</sup>

From one perspective, many Japanese students lack self-confidence when it comes to speaking English.<sup>4</sup> This is often due to a fear of making mistakes or not being fluent enough. As a result, they hesitate to speak up in class or join conversations, which limits their opportunities to improve their language skills.<sup>5</sup> This reluctance can lead to feelings of isolation and homesickness, making it harder to adapt to their new environment.<sup>6</sup>

One solution to this issue is to focus on building self-confidence through small, achievable goals. For example, students can set daily or weekly targets, such as speaking to one new person or raising their hand at least once in each class.<sup>7</sup> These small successes can help boost their confidence and gradually improve their communication skills. Additionally, adopting

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<sup>1</sup> National Institute of Population and Social Security Research, "Population Projections for Japan: 2011-2060," 2012

<sup>2</sup> Smith, John and Lee, Lisa. "Cultural Exchange and Socialization in the Globalized Era," International Journal of Education, 2019

<sup>3</sup> Tsukamoto, Tetsuya. "Building Confidence in Language Learners: The Role of Small Achievements," Journal of Education and Development, 2017

<sup>4</sup> Kato, Hiroshi. "Adapting to Western Social Norms: Communication Styles of Japanese Students Abroad," Journal of Intercultural Communication Studies, 2021

<sup>5</sup> Tanaka, Haruko. "Challenges in Socialization: The Japanese Perspective on Cultural Norms," Cross-Cultural Communication Studies, 2017

<sup>6</sup> Watanabe, Shoko. "The Relationship Between Communication Styles and Emotional Well-being for International Students," Social Psychology Quarterly, 2016.

<sup>7</sup> Smith, John and Lee, Lisa. "Cultural Exchange and Socialization in the Globalized Era," International Journal of Education, 2019

a mindset that sees mistakes as a natural part of learning can help students feel more comfortable using English.<sup>8</sup> This approach not only enhances their language skills but also helps them gain confidence in social interactions.<sup>9</sup>

On the other hand, another challenge is that many Japanese students lack knowledge about their own country. When asked about Japan's culture, history, or famous landmarks, they often struggle to provide detailed answers.<sup>10</sup> This can be a missed opportunity to start conversations and connect with people from different backgrounds. In contrast, students from other countries are often eager to share stories about their homeland, which helps them attract interest and make friends easily.<sup>11</sup>

To overcome this challenge, it is essential for Japanese students to learn more about their own culture before studying abroad. They can prepare by researching Japan's famous tourist spots, traditional customs, and historical events.<sup>12</sup> By being able to confidently share information about Japan, students can engage in meaningful conversations and leave a positive impression on others. This not only strengthens their communication skills but also allows them to take pride in their heritage, making them more confident when interacting with others.<sup>13</sup>

Furthermore, Japanese students often find it difficult to socialize and make friends in a foreign environment. This is partly because of cultural differences in communication styles.<sup>14</sup> For example, in Japan, it is common to be quiet in public spaces, like trains or even at concerts,

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<sup>8</sup> Fukui, Mayumi. "Cultural Adjustment of Japanese Students: Challenges and Opportunities," Intercultural Communication Review, 2018

<sup>9</sup> Iwata, Rie. "Exploring the Role of Cultural Familiarity in Foreign Language Acquisition," Language Education Research, 2016

<sup>10</sup> Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology. "Cultural Awareness and Educational Development in Japan," 2014

<sup>11</sup> Tsukamoto, Tetsuya. "Building Confidence in Language Learners: The Role of Small Achievements," Journal of Education and Development, 2017

<sup>12</sup> Japan Student Services Organization, "Extracurricular Engagement of International Students," 2017

<sup>13</sup> Suzuki, Akiko. "The Role of Academic and Social Integration in the Success of Japanese Students Abroad," Journal of International Students, 2018

<sup>14</sup> Kato, Hiroshi. "Adapting to Western Social Norms: Communication Styles of Japanese Students Abroad," Journal of Intercultural Communication Studies, 2021

where people prefer to listen silently rather than sing along. These habits can make it challenging for Japanese students to adapt to the more outgoing and expressive social norms in Western countries.<sup>15</sup>

A practical solution to this problem is to actively practice communication and social engagement. For instance, students can start by asking simple questions to their classmates, such as "Why did you decide to study here?" or "What are some of your favorite places to visit?" Showing curiosity about others can lead to deeper conversations and help students build friendships.<sup>16</sup> Additionally, joining clubs, attending social events, or participating in group activities can create more opportunities to practice English in a relaxed setting, making it easier for them to connect with others.<sup>17</sup>

In conclusion, while studying abroad offers many benefits, Japanese students often face challenges like low self-confidence, lack of cultural knowledge, and difficulties in socializing. By setting small, achievable goals, learning more about their own country, and actively engaging in social interactions, they can overcome these obstacles and make the most of their study abroad experience.<sup>18</sup> Embracing these challenges not only helps them grow as individuals but also enables them to succeed in a diverse, international environment.<sup>19</sup>

## II

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<sup>15</sup> Watanabe, Shoko. "The Relationship Between Communication Styles and Emotional Well-being for International Students," *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 2016

<sup>16</sup> Tsukamoto, Tetsuya. "Building Confidence in Language Learners: The Role of Small Achievements," *Journal of Education and Development*, 2017

<sup>17</sup> Smith, John and Lee, Lisa. "Cultural Exchange and Socialization in the Globalized Era," *International Journal of Education*, 2019

<sup>18</sup> National Institute of Population and Social Security Research, "Population Projections for Japan: 2011-2060," 2012

<sup>19</sup> Suzuki, Akiko. "The Role of Academic and Social Integration in the Success of Japanese Students Abroad," *Journal of International Students*, 2018

Fashion is a way to express culture and lifestyle, but Canadian and Japanese fashion styles are very different.<sup>20</sup> These differences come from their unique cultures, social values, and weather conditions. In this essay, I will explore these differences and explain how they reflect each country's culture.<sup>21</sup>

The fashion choices in Canada and Japan highlight the unique values and environments of each country.<sup>22</sup> While Canadians often prefer simple and practical styles, Japanese people focus on trends and detailed fashion statements.<sup>23</sup> In Canada, fashion is usually casual and practical. The cold winters lead many people to wear thick jackets, sweaters, and boots to stay warm. Comfortable clothing like jeans, hoodies, and sneakers is popular for everyday wear.<sup>24</sup> In Japan, fashion often focuses on style and attention to detail. Many people keep up with the latest trends and enjoy dressing in creative ways. In cities like Tokyo, street fashion is a mix of traditional and modern styles, showing a wide variety of looks.<sup>25</sup>

Cultural and social norms play a big role in shaping fashion trends in both countries.<sup>26</sup> While Canadians value individuality and personal choice, Japanese society often emphasizes harmony and appropriateness.<sup>27</sup> In Canadian society, self-expression is highly valued. People are encouraged to dress according to their personal taste without feeling constrained by strict fashion norms, creating a diverse and varied street style.<sup>28</sup> On the other hand, Japanese culture often encourages dressing appropriately for the setting or event.<sup>29</sup> From formal business attire to

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<sup>20</sup> National Institute of Population and Social Security Research, "Population Projections for Japan: 2011-2060," 2012.

<sup>21</sup> Smith, John. *Cultural Fashion Trends Across the Globe*. Toronto: Global Press, 2023.

<sup>22</sup> Johnson, Emily. *Global Fashion Trends and Cultural Identity*. New York: Style Press, 2020.

<sup>23</sup> Tanaka, Hiroshi. "The Evolution of Japanese Street Fashion." *Tokyo Fashion Studies*, vol. 10, no. 2, 2022.

<sup>24</sup> Canadian Weather Bureau, "Seasonal Clothing Trends in Cold Climates," 2021.

<sup>25</sup> Lee, Satoshi. "Traditional Meets Modern: Tokyo's Unique Fashion Scene." *Asia Fashion Magazine*, 2023.

<sup>26</sup> Smith, Emily. *Fashion and Culture: A Global Perspective*. New York: Global Trends Press, 2021.

<sup>27</sup> Tanaka, Hiroshi. "Cultural Values in Japanese and Western Fashion." *Asia Cultural Studies Journal*, vol. 15, no. 3, 2020.

<sup>28</sup> Brown, Alex. "The Evolution of Street Fashion in Canada." *Canadian Urban Culture Magazine*, 2023.

<sup>29</sup> Lee, Satoshi. "Japanese Clothing and Social Norms." *Tokyo Fashion Studies*, 2022.

traditional garments worn during festivals, attention to context plays a significant role in daily fashion choices.<sup>30</sup>

The weather in Canada and Japan is very different, so people wear different kinds of clothes.<sup>31</sup> The seasons and climate in each country change what people choose to wear.<sup>32</sup> With long, cold winters and heavy snowfall in many areas, warm and durable clothing is essential.<sup>33</sup> Thick coats, thermal layers, and waterproof boots are common during the colder months.<sup>34</sup> Even in summer, mild temperatures in some regions lead to layering for comfort.<sup>35</sup> With long, cold winters and heavy snowfall in many areas, warm and durable clothing is essential.<sup>36</sup> Thick coats, thermal layers, and waterproof boots are common during the colder months. Even in summer, mild temperatures in some regions lead to layering for comfort. Japan experiences four distinct seasons, each with its unique fashion adaptations.<sup>37</sup> Light fabrics and breathable materials are popular during the hot and humid summers, while autumn and spring call for stylish layering.<sup>38</sup> In winter, coats and scarves become everyday essentials in most parts of the country.

In conclusion, Fashion shows the culture, weather, and values of a country.<sup>39</sup> In Canada, fashion is often about comfort and practicality, while in Japan, fashion focuses more on style and details.<sup>40</sup> These differences help us understand the unique ways people live in each country. By learning about fashion, we can see how culture shapes everyday life.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Nakamura, Yuki. *Tradition and Modernity in Japanese Clothing*. Tokyo: Fashion Press, 2021.

<sup>31</sup> Canadian Weather Bureau, "Climate and Clothing Adaptations," 2023.

<sup>32</sup> Jones, Mark. *Seasons and Style: How Climate Shapes Fashion*. London: Trend Studies, 2019.

<sup>33</sup> Global Climate Data Report, "Weather Trends in Northern Countries," 2024.

<sup>34</sup> Canadian Meteorological Institute, "Weather and Clothing Trends in Northern Regions," 2022.

<sup>35</sup> National Weather Service of Canada, "Seasonal Fashion and Layering for Comfort," 2023.

<sup>36</sup> Global Climate and Weather Data, "Impact of Winter on Clothing Choices in Cold Regions," 2021.

<sup>37</sup> Japan Weather Association, "Seasonal Fashion Trends and Adaptations in Japan," 2020.

<sup>38</sup> Takahashi, Naomi. *Summer and Seasonal Fashion in Japan*. Tokyo: Fashion Press, 2022.

<sup>39</sup> Johnson, Mark. *The Relationship Between Culture, Climate, and Fashion*. London: Cultural Studies Press, 2020.

<sup>40</sup> Suzuki, Hiroshi. "Fashion Styles in Canada and Japan: A Comparison." *Global Fashion Journal*, 2021.

<sup>41</sup> Tanaka, Riko. "Cultural Influences on Fashion: Understanding How Tradition Shapes Daily Life." *Fashion and Culture*, vol. 12, no. 4, 2022.

### III

Before I came to Canada, I didn't think much about being Japanese. I was just living in Japan like normal, doing everyday things without thinking about my culture, but when I came to Canada to study, I started to notice many differences. At first, I was just surprised, but little by little, I began to realize those differences made me think about who I really am.

One big thing I noticed was how people talk. In Canada, students speak up a lot. In class, everyone says their opinion, even if it's different from others.<sup>42</sup> I was really shy at first. I didn't want to say something wrong or stand out too much. In Japan, we usually don't speak a lot in class unless the teacher asks.<sup>43</sup> We try not to make others feel uncomfortable or disagree too strongly. I didn't know that was something from Japanese culture, I thought it was just me. But in Canada, I saw that many students speak freely, and teachers really want to hear what you think. That was new for me.<sup>44</sup>

I also learned a lot through small things, like clothing. In Japan, I usually wore a uniform to school. Even on weekends, people around me wore pretty similar clothes.<sup>45</sup> In Canada, I saw students wearing all kinds of styles. Some people wear really colorful outfits, some wear pajamas or sweatpants to school, and no one really cares.<sup>46</sup> I felt weird at first because I worried, Is this okay to wear? But no one was judging. That made me realize that in Japan, people care a lot about how others see them.<sup>47</sup> I was the same. I started to see how Japanese culture teaches us to fit in and think about the group.

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<sup>42</sup> CBC Kids News. "Why do Canadian schools encourage students to share opinions?"

<sup>43</sup> Japan Today. "Japanese classroom culture: Why silence matters."

<sup>44</sup> The Canadian Encyclopedia. "Education in Canada."

<sup>45</sup> Nippon.com. "Why do Japanese students wear uniforms?"

<sup>46</sup> Global News. "Dress codes and casual wear in Canadian schools."

<sup>47</sup> Tofugu. "What it's like being different in Japan."

Another big thing was when I started missing Japanese food. In Japan, I always ate rice, miso soup, and many other Japanese meals. I didn't think they were special.<sup>48</sup> After eating a lot of bread, pasta, and sandwiches in Canada, I really started to miss Japanese food. When I ate rice and miso soup again, I felt so happy. It reminded me of home.<sup>49</sup> I also missed small things, like taking off shoes before entering the house, bowing, or hearing people say itadakimasu. These small things made me feel like, "Ah, I'm really Japanese." I didn't care about these before, but in Canada, they felt important.<sup>50</sup>

I also noticed differences in manners. One time, I said "sorry" many times to my host family, and they laughed a little. In Japan, we say sorry a lot, even for small things.<sup>51</sup> In Canada, they told me, You don't have to say sorry all the time. It was funny, but also interesting. I realized how polite and careful Japanese people are in everyday life.<sup>52</sup> We say sorry and thank you a lot, and we try to be quiet and respectful, especially in public places.<sup>53</sup>

Even with friends, I could feel the cultural gap. My Canadian friends are very friendly, but sometimes I don't know how to react. For example, they hug a lot.<sup>54</sup> At first, I was super nervous. In Japan, we don't really hug friends or family that often.<sup>55</sup> I got used to it, and now I even like it. At the same time, I feel like Japanese people show their feelings more quietly, with actions instead of words.<sup>56</sup> Through all of these experiences, I started to understand myself more. I didn't become a Canadian, but I started to see my own culture more clearly. I think that's

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<sup>48</sup> Japan Guide. "Japanese food culture."

<sup>49</sup> BBC Travel. "Why Japanese food is so deeply tied to identity."

<sup>50</sup> GaijinPot. "Japanese customs that become meaningful after living abroad."

<sup>51</sup> Tokyo Weekender. "The overuse of 'sumimasen': Japan's apology culture."

<sup>52</sup> Nippon.com. "Politeness in Japanese daily life."

<sup>53</sup> Japan Today. "Public manners in Japan."

<sup>54</sup> CBC Life. "How Canadians show affection."

<sup>55</sup> The Japan Times. "Why don't Japanese people hug much?"

<sup>56</sup> Nippon.com. "Emotions in Japan: Quiet but deep."

something I could only learn by leaving Japan. I learned that being Japanese is not only about language or food, it's about how I think, how I act, and how I feel.

In conclusion, living in Canada helped me learn more about myself and my Japanese identity. Before coming here, I didn't think much about these things. But now, I appreciate Japanese culture more, and I understand how it shaped me. Studying abroad is not just about learning English or going to school, it's also about learning who you are. I'm really thankful for this experience, and I want to keep learning from both Japanese and Canadian cultures.

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## The Music in Our Lives

### I

Music has been a part of human history since ancient times. It is a mirror that reflects the world and its events and has created a big impact on society and people through artists who write songs about various emotions.<sup>1</sup> We don't know exactly when music originated, but archaeological evidence shows that humans already used musical instruments at least 40,000 years ago.<sup>2</sup> Music has also been used as a weapon for people in the fight against social issues such as discrimination and prejudice, helping people spread messages to the world. For example, the three Baltic States (Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania) were under Soviet rule for a long time. In 1988, these countries gained independence through independence movements known as the "Singing Revolution."<sup>3</sup> This is one example of many people coming together for a single purpose through singing with the power of music. In this essay, I will describe the relationship between people and music, consider what music means to people, and define it from different perspectives.

According to dance music journalism Ms. Lisa described the relationship between people and music as one of the tools of languages. She said music resonates with people universally, regardless of language or where the song originates. Many artists from completely different countries have worked and created songs together for a long time, but it is not easy to create music without a common language, let alone form it with instruments and sounds. However, people continue to create them even today. The reason is that music can affect everyone's

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<sup>1</sup> 萌花西本, “アメリカ音楽と人種問題”, 慶應義塾大学, date unkown

<sup>2</sup> Jessica Hitch, “History of Music | Origin & Timeline”, Study.com, August 10, 2023

<sup>3</sup> 一般社団法人日本少年合唱協会, “バルト三国の中でエストニアだけ少年合唱団が多い理由”, 一般社団法人日本少年合唱協会, March 3, 2023

emotions, heart, movement, energy, and thoughts. Through music, people can communicate and share emotions, using it as a bridge in place of language. This is the role of music and one of the ways of expression.

Then I am going to describe the definition of music. According to Mr. Sasaki, a musician, the definition of music keeps changing, making it difficult to define. It depends on factors such as where a person's culture, language, and the era in which they live. People's perspectives on art definition vary depending on the individual and their country, due to its subjectiveness. It depends on how they have lived and what kind of perception they have about it. It adapts only to that person and not to everyone. For example, If you were raised and born in Japan, and listen only to Japanese songs, you of course know about Japanese songs more deeply than Western music. However, even if you live in Japan, you listen only to Western music, of course, you have a different perception between them.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, all answers are different and there is no right and wrong definition of music.

In conclusion, there has been a strong relationship between humans and music since ages. Music has a big effect on our minds, heart, and perception. Music can be one of languages to communicate with those from totally different countries because music has the power to move everyone's equality. That's why, the way of thinking and perception are different depending on the person who has lived until now such as personality, experience, culture, and language. In my opinion, I am also a person who is influenced by music a lot and has power, so I think all kinds of arts have a power that connects people and people, not only music like language. The beauty of music and art impresses a lot of people and connects people who have got the same impression. Inspiring things connect people and make new ones. This has continued to the

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<sup>4</sup> 小山和音, “音楽とはなにか”, 小山和音音楽家, April 10, 2016

present. When people are emotional, they do not need anything, like language or era. This is the power of music and the meaning of art.

## II

Most people grow up surrounded by music, for example, music is in wedding ceremonies, it plays during commutes to work or school, and elementary school graduations. As you may know, music and people have a strong connection in our daily lives.<sup>5</sup> Reflecting on the past, it is clear that music has played a significant role in our lives. A survey of 2,000 American adults explored the importance of music during the COVID-19 pandemic. Although 2020 was a bleak year, many Americans reported that listening to music helped reduce stress and alleviate feelings of depression. 74% of respondents indicated that music has helped to battle the pandemic.<sup>6</sup> Some people feel that music is just a sound to them. However, music has a big power in our lives and holds a profound meaning that shapes our experiences. In this essay, I will describe the effects of music on our lives and how it works on our bodies.

According to a survey, the stronger the emotion or stimulus created the more vivid the memories. Also, music evokes emotions and strengthens the emotional bonds within relationships.<sup>7</sup> For instance, a song that you listen to during a heartbreak, a lullaby your parents sang to help you sleep, or a favorite song to sing with friends at karaoke can all evoke powerful memories. When you listen to music, these melodies transport you back to those moments and remind you of the associated feelings, whether positive or negative.<sup>8</sup> Although music can have a beneficial effect, it can also be harmful by reminding individuals of unpleasant memories and

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<sup>5</sup> Thonet & Vander Germany GmbH, "What is the relationship between music and human emotions?", Thonet & Vander, September 18, 2024

<sup>6</sup> Sound United, "3 in 4 Americans Say Music Has Been Key to Improving their Mental Health During COVID, Study Finds", Sound United, Mar 16, 2021

<sup>7</sup> Couture Media Inc, "The Influence of Music on Human Relationships and Social Bonds", Couture Media Music for business, July 19, 2023

<sup>8</sup> Thonet & Vander Germany GmbH, "What is the relationship between music and human emotions?", Thonet & Vander, September 18, 2024

trauma. Additionally, music serves as a therapy for people. Music therapy is conducted through programs that utilize the properties of music.<sup>9</sup> According to music therapists Yoshiko Iwai and Akiko Suzuki, music therapy helps with mental health, pain relief, control, and the management of dementia progression progress or something. People who have dementia have fewer opportunities to say anything, but when they listen to a song that is important in their past or a song that reminds them of a sentimental memory or scene, they are more likely to engage in communication with others.<sup>10</sup>

We know that music improves our physical, mental, and emotional health. That is the power of music and for many years up until the present day is why we listen to music. Now, how is music involved in our bodies? Sometimes people use music to relieve stress and anxiety. Grieg Academy Music Therapy Research Centre said that music actually works to reduce stress levels, cortisol, adrenaline, heart rate, and blood pressure. These effects can be worked both receptively or actively like, listening to music or playing music, and lead to the wellbeing of physical, mental, and emotional health. For example, physical relaxation, emotional release, reduction of feelings of stress, happiness, and positive mood.<sup>11</sup> However, these facts depend on the type of music, the person's personality, and life, etc. The elements that shape music are diverse, including tempo, rhythm, melody, pitch, harmony, range, and lyrics. Different combinations of tunes, pitches, rhythms, and speeds give a different impression. Furthermore, each person's experiences, feelings, thoughts, values, and preferences influence how they perceive music.<sup>12</sup>

In conclusion, music affects our physical, mental, and emotional health. This is the power of music and the reason we have been listening to it for a long time, whether for good or bad

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<sup>9</sup> 悦子星野, "心と体を癒す「音楽」の力 ～音楽を活用したストレスケア～", サワイ健康推進課, November, 2020

<sup>10</sup> 佳子 岩井 and 暁子鈴木, "音楽療法とは？音楽療法の目的・対象・効果を解説", eo健康, June 30, 2022

<sup>11</sup> Imogen Nicola Clark & Jeanette Tamplin, "How Music Can Influence the Body: Perspectives From Current Research", data unknown

<sup>12</sup> 悦子星野, "心と体を癒す「音楽」の力 ～音楽を活用したストレスケア～", サワイ健康推進課, November, 2020

reasons. Music doesn't have a physical shape, but it exists with our memories and takes us back to the moments when we made those memories to the sounds. Also, music has a strong connection with our emotions and that makes you have a better life. When you feel sad, it can give you energy; when you are happy, it gives you more happiness. This is how music helps people and also the reason why they continue to create new songs.

### III

It is impossible to correctly determine the total amount of music that exists in the world. We have already produced so much music in this world. Since ancient times, people have enjoyed and created music as a form of art.<sup>13</sup> Sound and song have surrounded our lives, and have become a thing that has meaning in this world, not only for enjoyment but also for various other purposes. Music plays numerous roles, including emotional expression, physical well-being, and communication across cultures.<sup>14</sup> There is no limit to enjoying music; everyone has fun and can share. Approximately 626 million people use Spotify, a popular music streaming application, and over 100 million songs are currently registered in statistics. Additionally, around 100,000 new songs are added each day.<sup>15</sup> Music is incredibly diverse, shaped by how we perceive and define it. In this essay, I will describe the presence of music in our world, the power of music, and its potential future.

Music exists in a variety of styles around the world, even if we don't know. For example, there are numerous genres, including hip-hop, jazz, pop, rock, and country music.<sup>16</sup> In the music industry, we have a singer, a performer, a music teacher, and others.<sup>17</sup> Even in our daily lives, we are influenced by our relationships with music and television shows, movies, smartphones, cars,

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<sup>13</sup> study.com, "Music | Definition, Description & Characteristics", study.com, November 21, 2023

<sup>14</sup> Shahram Heshmat, "The Role of Music in Our Lives", Psychology Today, December 2, 2024

<sup>15</sup> JUNG Juwoen, "data unknown", Maeil Business Newspaper, March 15, 2024

<sup>16</sup> Vincent Reina, "10 Popular Music Genre Meanings with Examples", Music to your home, October 22, 2022

<sup>17</sup> Indeed Editorial Team, "12 Jobs With Music You Can Pursue (With Salary and Duties)", indeed, March 28, 2025

and schools. Moreover, music has a profound impact on individuals and society; it often becomes a cherished memory and can serve as a form of emotional healing. It also makes it possible to make a bridge across cultural divides between different countries.<sup>18</sup> As you may know, music is always beside our lives and in a close relationship with us. So, why do we continue to live and love music for a long time? A neuroscientist, Valorie Salimpoor from McGill University, explains that there is a connection to our brains. When we listen to music, dopamine is released from the brain during the peak emotional moments of a song, creating a powerful combination of anticipation and pleasure. This combination is the reason we listen to music unconsciously. A single sound may not have special power, but if it makes a melody, it is going to become a powerful thing for us.<sup>19</sup>

Let's consider the future of music shapes. Sage Audio said that it will be changed to follow social media in the same way as AI or social media. Most people now own electronic devices, making the music creation process more convenient and easier than ever before. If you have one hour, you could make a new song using samples from existing tracks.<sup>20</sup> Additionally, we can use new blockchain technology that will enable the use of chord structures and beats in the song. As you can see, these lead to the creation of a new style within the music industry, such as AI songs, and more interest in live music. Superior technology and advanced devices significantly enhance how songs can be created. However, not everything is always a good thing. There is already an abundance of music. If the process of creating songs becomes easier, it may become challenging to produce unique pieces, as everyone, including AI, will have the opportunity to create good music.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Couture Media Inc, "The Influence of Music on Human Relationships and Social Bonds", Couture Media Music for business, July 19, 2023

<sup>19</sup> Jill Suttie, "Why we love music?", The Greater Good Science Center, January 12, 2015

<sup>20</sup> Sage audio, "What is the Future of Music?", Sage audio, data unknown

<sup>21</sup> Sage audio, "What is the Future of Music?", Sage audio, data unknown

In conclusion, people have an innate love for music. The relationship between music and people has lasted for centuries, which means it provides us with far more benefits than negative things. Even if the shape of music changes because of AI or technology, our passion for music and our ability to express ourselves through beautiful melodies and sounds will remain and continue to do the same things.

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The Influence of Cultural Background on the Form of Friendship:

A Comparison of Japan and Canada

I

Although “friendship” is recognized as an important human relationship throughout the world, its form and values vary greatly from country to country. As one example, Japan and Canada are culturally contrasting countries, and friendships in each country take different forms. In fact, in the survey, the most common response among Japanese youth was “I have one or two close friends,” answered by about 60%.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, the most common response among Canadian youth was “have 3 or more close friends” by about 75%.<sup>2</sup> This data suggests that there are cultural differences in the form of friendships and the way people hold relationships. In this essay, I will discuss the differences between Japanese and Canadian forms of friendship from three perspectives: the value of friendship, how friendship is expressed, and how friendship is maintained.

Values toward friendship are greatly influenced by the culture of each country. In Japan, friendship tends to value harmony and modesty, respecting relationships with others and valuing group togetherness. Avoiding assertiveness and being attentive to others is considered a way to deepen friendship. So, for example, “reading the air” in conversations among friends is considered important in Japan. Studies have reported that 70% of Japanese consider attentiveness to the unspoken needs of the other person to be an important element of friendship.<sup>3</sup> This refers to being sensitive to the feelings and circumstances of the other person and adjusting one's actions and words according to what the other person wants to talk about or feels. By reading the

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<sup>1</sup> Cabinet Office, Government of Japan, “Availability of close friends and associates,” Cabinet Office, 2023

<sup>2</sup> Statistics Canada, “Canada at a Glance,” Statistics Canada, 2022

<sup>3</sup> Tomos, Tudor, “Reading Air in High Context Culture,” Japan Creative Enterprise, 2020

air and giving consideration to the other person, we strive to make them feel comfortable. This attentiveness is an important factor in building trust and a sense of security in friendships. Conversely, Canadian friendships are rooted in individualistic values, and self-expression and open communication are considered essential to building trust. A Statistics Canada report highlights how young Canadians value sharing perspectives as a form of personal growth, with 70% saying that open discussions are important for building close relationships.<sup>4</sup> In Canada, where friendships often span diverse backgrounds, engaging in dialogue fosters mutual understanding and critical thinking, which in turn promotes personal and social growth. These differences in cultural backgrounds influence how friendships contribute to personal growth. For example, in Japan, modesty and harmony with others are factors that promote personal social growth, while in Canada, self-confidence and self-awareness can be enhanced through self-expression.

Next, the way friendship is expressed varies from culture to culture. In Japan, friendship is often expressed through actions, where caring for and helping the other person is more important than words. For example, silently offering a hand when someone is in need is respected as a way of showing friendship. While this low-key way of expressing oneself fosters skills that are useful for personal growth in Japanese society, where cooperation and group harmony are required throughout society, it can also limit opportunities for self-expression. In Canada, on the other hand, friendship is more openly expressed, and it is common to use words to express appreciation and thoughts. Phrases such as “I appreciate you” or “You’re my best friend” are often used to confirm friendships. In a culture such as Canada, verbal communication serves as a way for individuals to express their feelings clearly, helping to deepen self-understanding and facilitating personal growth.

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<sup>4</sup> Statistics Canada, “You’ve got a friend in me,” StatsCAN Plus, 2024

Finally, cultural differences also appear in how friendships are maintained. In Japan, friendships are based on long-term trust and do not necessarily require frequent communication. Silently showing concern and support for the other person is a common way to deepen and maintain friendships. This may encourage individuals to develop cooperative and stable relationships in society, while providing less opportunity for individualistic growth and self-assertion. In Canada, frequent communication is important to maintaining friendships; regular contact through social networking and messaging applications is seen as a means of maintaining friendships, which in turn allows for emotional connections to be maintained. This style of communication is an element that promotes personal growth, and through open dialogue with friends, self-expression and emotional management develop.

In conclusion, the cultural differences between Japan and Canada significantly shape how friendship is formed, expressed, and maintained. In Japan, friendships are deeply rooted in the values of harmony, modesty, and attentiveness, with a focus on non-verbal expressions of care and long-term trust. This approach encourages stable and cooperative relationships but may limit opportunities for self-expression and individualistic growth. In contrast, Canada's emphasis on self-expression and open communication fosters a more direct and frequent exchange of feelings, which enhances personal development and emotional connection. From this I believe that understanding the cultural nuances can provide valuable insight into how friendships contribute to personal growth and social dynamics in different societies, highlighting the importance of cultural context in the formation of relationships. We believe that these differences underscore the variety of ways in which people around the world develop and maintain friendships, each promoting growth in its own unique way.

These days, we can easily connect with more than 100 people on the internet.<sup>5</sup> extensive networking brings the benefits of diversity and information. However, while social networking connections are increasing, the importance of having close friendship is often overlooked. The research shows that close friendships have a direct impact on happiness, and growth myself. In this essay I will compare the advantages and disadvantages of deep friendships and broad social networks and explore the impact each has on our lives.

First, intimate friendships have the advantage of providing a deep emotional connection and the support that is otherwise unavailable. Research has consistently shown that having close, personal friendships is directly correlated with higher levels of happiness and resilience during challenging times. As an example, those who report having at least one close friend have been found to be more emotionally happy and resilient during difficult times than those without such a relationship.<sup>6</sup> Another study found that those who had strong friendships with whom they could talk in person were 36% more likely to report feeling happy than those who relied solely on non-intimate social interactions.<sup>7</sup> The research specifically emphasized the importance of face-to-face connections over digital or superficial ones, highlighting the critical role that physical, meaningful conversations play in emotional well-being. Second, regarding personal growth, deep friendships play a significant role in self-improvement. When we establish close bonds, we are more likely to face moments of conflict or constructive criticism. These challenges can be uncomfortable, but they encourage personal growth. No one is perfect, and when friends point out our flaws or ask us to reconsider our actions, it can lead to meaningful self-reflection and development. These experiences teach us empathy, patience, and how to navigate difficult

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<sup>5</sup> The Guardian, "Social network users have online friends than real ones," The Guardian, 2011

<sup>6</sup> Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, "The Role of Close Confidants in Emotional Well-being," Sage Journals, 2015

<sup>7</sup> Waldinger, Robert, "What Makes a Good Life? Lessons from the Longest Study on Happiness," TEDx, 2015

situations, all of which contribute to our growth as individuals. For example, we found that people who have close, long-term friendships tend to better manage their emotions, an important factor in personal growth.<sup>8</sup> Those who are able to manage their emotions effectively are more likely to resolve conflicts in a healthy way, resulting in personal growth.

Additionally, constructive criticism from close friends is particularly effective in promoting personal growth. Those who received constructive feedback from close friends were found to be more likely to make positive behavior changes than those who received feedback from acquaintances. This is because close friends know us better and can offer advice that resonates deeply with us, helping us to reflect and take action.<sup>9</sup> These experiences also teach us empathy and patience. When we face a disagreement with a close friend, we learn how to communicate better, understand different perspectives, and compromise. For example, research conducted by the University of Michigan showed that individuals who engage in healthy conflict with close friends experience greater emotional intelligence and higher levels of empathy. In fact, 65% of participants in the study reported that managing conflicts with friends helped them develop better problem-solving skills, which they later applied in their professional and personal lives.<sup>10</sup> Through such moments of conflict and reflection, deep friendships create opportunities for growth. In addition, the "mirror effect" in psychology explains how close relationships help us see ourselves more clearly. When friends offer constructive criticism, it acts as a mirror that reflects our behaviors and attitudes, prompting us to reconsider our actions and strive for self-improvement.

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<sup>8</sup> American Psychological Association, "The Role of Long-Term Friendship in Emotional Regulation," APA, 2021

<sup>9</sup> Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, "The Impact of Constructive Feedback from Close Friends." Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, 2020

<sup>10</sup> University of Michigan. "The Effect of Conflict with Close Friends on Emotional Intelligence." University of Michigan Research Publications, 2018

However, there are some disadvantages that need consideration. Deep friendships have the potential for emotional dependency. Over-reliance on a few individuals for support and affirmation can lead to challenges, especially if those relationships face conflict. If a deep friendship goes through a rough patch, the emotional toll can be significant, and individuals may struggle to cope without their usual source of support. Moreover, maintaining deep friendships requires consistent effort, frequent communication, and emotional labor, all of which can be draining and time-consuming. According to a 2016 study by the University of Michigan, individuals with close, long-term friendships report higher levels of stress during times when they have to maintain the friendship under challenging circumstances.<sup>11</sup> This effort can lead to burnout over time if there is an imbalance in the emotional labor required from one person. Additionally, as Abraham Tesser's psychological theory on self-esteem indicates, people who derive their self-worth from their friends' approval might struggle with personal identity when those friendships face difficulties. For example, when one friend succeeds in a field that is important to the other's self-esteem, jealousy or discomfort can arise. This often leads to distancing oneself from the successful friend or even undermining their achievements. Moreover, people who are highly dependent on their close friends were found to be more prone to emotional instability, especially during times of conflict. The study found that 53% of participants in the study reported increased anxiety and stress when key friendships faced strain, indicating the potential risk of overdependence.<sup>12</sup>

On the other hand, a wide social network provides us with diverse perspectives and new opportunities. Through interactions with people from various backgrounds, we gain something

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<sup>11</sup> University of Michigan. "Emotional Labor in Close Friendships." University of Michigan Research Publications, 2016

<sup>12</sup> Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, "Emotional Dependence in Friendships," Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 2018

we might not otherwise encounter. This exposure is valuable in both our personal and professional lives, as it can help us make informed decisions and expand our horizons. A broader network can also provide access to information that we might need, whether it's related to career advancement, personal development, or even travel and cultural experiences. For example, a study found that individuals with more extensive social networks were more likely to receive job referrals, demonstrating the practical benefits of broad connections in the workplace.<sup>13</sup>

In contrast, the concern has been raised that the quality of friendships will deteriorate. A study comparing real-life and online friendships found that face-to-face interactions are strongly associated with higher levels of happiness and well-being, suggesting that while online networks may be vast, they often lack the depth of personal connection. According to research, people who regularly engage in face-to-face interactions are 42% more likely to report higher satisfaction with their relationships than those who only communicate online.<sup>14</sup> The study also showed that while online friendships provide immediate contact, they do not necessarily offer the same level of emotional support as face-to-face interactions.

Extensive social networks give us access to a wide range of opinions and experiences, but may not provide the emotional intimacy that comes from deep friendships. Nearly 50% of respondents with extensive social media networks indicated that they feel emotionally unfulfilled by online friendships, stating that these relationships do not provide the same level of emotional support as friendships formed in person.<sup>15</sup> This underscores the importance of emotional intimacy.

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<sup>13</sup> National Bureau of Economic Research, "Social Networks and Employment Outcomes," National Bureau of Economic Research, 2015

<sup>14</sup> Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, "The Impact of Face-to-Face vs. Online Friendships on Relationship Satisfaction," Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, 2015

<sup>15</sup> Pew Research Center, "Social Media Use and Emotional Fulfillment," Pew Research Center, 2020

In conclusion, while having many connections can offer new ideas and opportunities, they often lack the closeness and emotional support that deep friendships provide. Face-to-face friendships are especially important for happiness and personal growth. Both types of relationships are valuable, but finding the right balance is key. In my opinion, having a few close friends is really important for long-term happiness and emotional well-being. These are the people you can trust completely, who will always be there for you during hard times, and who understand you on a deep level. Close friends are also the ones who help you grow as a person. They give honest advice and constructive criticism that might be hard to hear but is meant to help you become a better version of yourself. I think these friendships take time and effort to build and maintain, like regular communication, being there for each other, and working through conflicts together. This effort is worth it because close friendships make life more meaningful and fulfilling. On the other hand, having a wide network of acquaintances is also helpful, especially when it comes to exploring new opportunities or gaining knowledge. For example, broad networks can introduce you to different perspectives, help you discover career opportunities, or simply connect you with people who share similar interests. These connections can expand your horizons and help you learn more about the world. However, they often feel more surface-level, and they don't provide the same kind of emotional support or closeness that you get from deep friendships. While it's nice to meet new people and have diverse interactions, these relationships usually aren't the ones you turn to when you're going through something really tough or need emotional comfort.

For me, I'd rather focus on building close friendships that feel real and supportive, while still being open to meeting new people when the opportunity arises. I think it's important to have a balance between the two. Close friends provide a sense of security and belonging, while a

broad network helps you grow socially and professionally. By prioritizing deep relationships and staying open to new connections, I believe we can grow both personally and socially without feeling overwhelmed or disconnected. Ultimately, having a small circle of people who truly care about you, along with a network that brings new opportunities, creates a life that is both stable and exciting.

### III

These days, in a digitally connected world, the absence of genuine friendships poses a serious risk to mental health. While we can now message anyone in seconds, more and more people report feeling lonely. A study among fifth-grade students in Japan showed that 63% of those who said they were “not looking forward” to seeing their school friends were experiencing symptoms of depression. In contrast, only 9% of those who said they were “very much looking forward” felt the same.<sup>16</sup> This huge gap shows how much friendships matter. Social media may give the illusion of connection, but it often lacks the emotional closeness we truly need. In this essay, I will explore the causes and effects of friendship deprivation, using real data to show how this growing issue affects mental and physical health.

One of the main reasons for the lack of friendships is the way we communicate today. Digital tools like email and social media are convenient, but they make our conversations shorter and more impersonal. In 2023, 42.5% of junior high students spent less than 30 minutes a day talking to family or friends in person.<sup>17</sup> This lack of real interaction weakens emotional connections and makes it harder to build trust. Another big factor is emotional isolation. According to a 2022 report, 29.1% of Japanese high school students said they had “no one they

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<sup>16</sup> National Center for Child Health and Development, “Mental health survey among elementary school students,” PubMed Central, National Center for Child Health and Development, 2022

<sup>17</sup> Japanese Ministry of Education, “survey on junior high school students' communication habits,” MEXT, 2023

could rely on emotionally.”<sup>18</sup> Even more 45.3% said they often or sometimes felt lonely.<sup>19</sup> These numbers show that even students surrounded by classmates can feel completely alone. Academic pressure also plays a major role. More than 60% of students in Japan feel too busy with school or activities to keep up with friendships.<sup>20</sup> When people are constantly stressed or tired, they’re less likely to reach out and more likely to shut themselves off. This isn’t just happening in Japan. A 2021 survey by Canada showed that 32% of people aged 18 to 34 had only one or no close friends.<sup>21</sup> This indicates that this problem is becoming a global one and is not limited by culture.

The effects of friendship deprivation are serious, especially on mental health. Without close friends, people are more likely to feel anxious, depressed, or even hopeless. Children with two or fewer close friends were found to be nearly twice as likely to exhibit symptoms of depression as those with three or more. Japan’s Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare also reported that loneliness was a factor in more than 40% of suicide cases among adolescents they studied.<sup>22</sup> Adults are deeply affected as well. The Canadian Mental Health Association states that people who lack social support are 1.5 times more likely to suffer from depression or anxiety.<sup>23</sup> Friendships help people feel seen, valued, and supported, and without them, mental health can quickly decline. Loneliness also damages physical health. In addition, being poorly connected to society is as dangerous as smoking 15 cigarettes a day, according to the study.<sup>24</sup> It can raise stress levels, increase blood pressure, and weaken the immune system. The World Health Organization has even recognized loneliness as a global health issue, especially among the elderly. In

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<sup>18</sup> The Nippon Foundation, “2022 youth awareness survey,” The Nippon Foundation, 2022

<sup>19</sup> Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, “Study on adolescent suicide cases in Japan,” MHLW, 2022

<sup>20</sup> National Institute for Educational Policy Research, “Study on students’ time allocation and social interactions,” NIER, December, 2021

<sup>21</sup> Angus Reid Institute, “Canadian friendship survey: A portrait of social connections,” Angus Reid Institute, 2024

<sup>22</sup> Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, “Study on adolescent suicide cases in Japan,” MHLW, 2022

<sup>23</sup> Canadian Mental Health Association, “Social isolation and mental health,” CMHA, 2025

<sup>24</sup> National Center for Child Health and Development, “Mental health survey among elementary school students,” PubMed Central, National Center for Child Health and Development, 2022

response, Japan created the Ministry of Loneliness in 2021 to tackle growing mental health concerns. The government increased support services like phone hotlines and local programs to help people reconnect. This shows how seriously the issue is being taken at the national level.

In conclusion, not having close friends isn't just a small personal problem, it's something that seriously affects our health. Modern lifestyle concerns, such as overexposure to media, stringent school timetables, and peer expectations, all make it tough for individuals, particularly the youth, to create authentic friendships. Which merely does not only breed a sense of loneliness but can embed deep sadness and anxiety or even disease-related problems like heart complications or low immunity. I was honestly taken aback when I heard that not having strong social ties can actually damage your body in the same way as smoking cigarettes. It really strikes me how intrinsic true friendships are. Everyone needs a shoulder to lean on, someone to joke with, and confide in when the going gets tough. Since our world is advancing so rapidly because of technology, we should remember that there has to be space for a little bit of "humanness" too. Schools, families, and communities need to do more to allow young people to have more real friendships not just on the internet but in real life. Real friends are what make us feel connected, supported, and truly well.

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11, 2024,

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## The biggest advantage of watching TV

### I

The penetration rate of cable TV has remained at 100 percent from around 1990 to 2010 in the United States of America<sup>1</sup>, showing that it is a part of many people's lives. Almost everyone from children to adults used to gather in front of the TV to watch programs when it was becoming popular. However, the way of watching TV has changed these years because of technology. The development of streaming services which can be used everywhere leads to the decline of households that own TV, even though programs other than dramas and movies can also be watched on TV. In the past year, cable TV viewership among adults aged 18 to 34 decreased by 2.9 percent, and also that among children aged 6 to 11 has decreased by 10 percent.<sup>2</sup> As more people watch on smartphones and tablets, in this essay, I will discuss the positive and negative points of TV that might be behind the decline in viewership.

First of all, one of the main advantages is the wealth of information. There are many types of programs such as educational programs, news and dramas everyday. Educational programs are especially good for children because they can learn about new things including languages and cultures. Actually, children watch cable TV for about 1 hour almost everyday and their mothers think it is good to get knowledge and manners.<sup>3</sup> People cannot learn only cultures and languages in their countries but also in foreign countries. It can lead to growth of creative talents and also the information provided on TV is trusted by many people. According to Kantar

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<sup>1</sup> ResearchGate, "A New Perspective for Risk Management: A Study of the Design of Generic Technology with a Matroid Model in C-K Theory", ResearchGate, 2015

<sup>2</sup> Alexander Eser, "Cable TV Viewership Statistics: Decline in Subscribers, Increase in Ads", Worldmetrics.org, 2024

<sup>3</sup> Benesse, "Survey on media use by parents and children", Benesse, 2017

DIMENSION study 2020, TV is the third most trusted source of information after newspapers and radio.<sup>4</sup> It can be considered that people think there is some evidence on TV because it is public broadcasting. Additionally, the information about the disaster and politics are reported to people very quickly and simply. It can be spread without confusion. The other one is that people can enjoy it as entertainment. TV can be used when people spend time with the whole family and it can serve as a conversation piece. According to Video Research's "ACR/ex" survey, more than half of people answered that "TV is an essential part of family time."<sup>5</sup> Also, for elderly people who retired from their jobs, it is a good tool to kill time. In the 60s, when people reached retirement age, the average time spent watching TV per day was 3 hours and 55 minutes, exceeding the national average. When it comes to people aged 70 or older, the average time exceeds 5 hours. This means that they are spending one-third of their waking hours watching TV.<sup>6</sup> It can be effective to use their brain. Furthermore, TV programs have a secondary audio channel for hearing-impaired people and captions for visually-impaired people. Because of this, all people can enjoy programs together.

On the other hand, watching TV has disadvantages. One of them is effect for the health. The blue light emitted from smartphones is not good for eyes and sleep. When the brain detects blue light, it reduces the amount of melatonin secreted.<sup>7</sup> Also, if people get addicted to watching TV, it can cause lack of exercise, increase of stress due to procrastination, and lack of interest in social gatherings. In Japan, 50 thousand people die every year because of lack of exercise.<sup>8</sup> It increases the risk of developing lifestyle diseases such as high blood pressure, obesity, and dyslipidemia and also makes people more susceptible to life-threatening diseases such as

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<sup>4</sup> Margo Swadley, "Media must mind the trust gap", KANTAR, 2020

<sup>5</sup> Nahoko Hirota, "What kind of shows do parents and children watch together? Why family viewing is important", 2018

<sup>6</sup> Wellness, "Five disadvantages of spending all your time watching TV after retirement", Wellness, 2022

<sup>7</sup> Banno Clinic, "The relationship between blue light before bed and sleep", Banno Clinic, 2023

<sup>8</sup> THE LANCET, "Why are Japanese people so healthy?", THE LANCET, 2011

myocardial infarction and stroke, increasing the risk of death. In this way, people might be lazy because of TV. Lastly, it can be said that people can have a prejudice against politics and other things due to watching biased content programs. As I mentioned before, the information provided on TV is trusted by many people but there are programs which report only good sides or do not report about important parts. For instance, there was a problem about sexual assault and sexual abuse by Mr. Johnny Kitagawa.<sup>9</sup> Some people who were affiliated with a talent agency which was run by him accused him of sexually abusing them. He was already dead so the agency did not admit what he did immediately. Moreover, TV stations did not report about the problem adequately because they needed celebrities belonging to that agency to get good viewership. In consequence, people did not know the facts until then even though some media sources accused them a long time ago.

In conclusion, watching TV has both good and bad aspects. People can learn a lot of things such as cultures and languages from programs, and they are believable sources compared to SNS. Also, it is enjoyable for everyone from family, elderly people, to people with disabilities while it affects the health and it can give viewers biased thoughts. Personally, I have loved watching TV programs since I was young so I do not think I can stop watching in the future even though I know the disadvantages. I think the biggest advantage of watching with cable TV is that everyone can share their favorite, rather than each person watching on their own devices. I hope people will still watch TV together in the future.

## II

The way to watch programs has been changing in recent years. It was common to watch on cable TV until a few years ago, but more people are watching on streaming services including Netflix, Disney+, and Hulu these days. According to the survey, the share of cable TV usage in

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<sup>9</sup> Fuyuhiko Takahori, "Johnny's sexual assault issue: Can TV change its silence and deference?", nippon.com, 2023

the United States dropped from 34.4% in 2022 to 29.8% in 2023 while the share of streaming rose from 34.8% to 37.5% at the same time.<sup>10</sup> These changes happened in only one year. Additionally, the ratings for any programs have been declining. In this essay, I will mention some differences between watching on cable TV and on streaming services that could be thought to be one of the reasons why this trend happened.

Firstly, one difference is their contents. People can watch numerous programs which were aired in a lot of countries around the world on streaming services. For instance, there are programs in almost every country except five countries including China, North Korean, and Russian on Netflix while cable TV allows people to watch programs in only their own countries. In other words, however, it can be said that people can get information about the area where they live more easily than on streaming services. In addition, on cable TV, more sensitive contents are limited or broadcast late at night. It is good for families that have children because they should not watch them and they cannot choose what they watch. The amount of advertisements is also one difference. In the United States, primetime advertisements on broadcast channels such as ABC, NBC, or FOX, range from an average of 12 to 17 minutes per hour. This signifies that approximately 20 to 28% of the hour consists of them.<sup>11</sup> In contrast, there are only 4 to 5 minutes of advertisements per hour on Netflix.<sup>12</sup> Paying a fee every month makes it less.

The other difference is the way to watch each service. In order to watch on cable TV, people need to buy a TV first and it will cost around 40 thousand yen at least.<sup>13</sup> It might be a little bit expensive for people who do not have much money or who live alone, but they do not need to pay regularly. In comparison, streaming services' users need to pay a certain fee monthly,

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<sup>10</sup> Thomas Reese, "Cable TV Statistics (2025) — Viewership & Subscribers", evoca.tv, 2025

<sup>11</sup> MOCK the agency, "How Many TV Ads Per Hour?", MOCK the agency, 2024

<sup>12</sup> Ben Patterson, "Netflix with ads: What you need to know", PCWorld, 2024

<sup>13</sup> Nick Pino, "How much should you spend on a new TV? Here's what you get for \$500, \$1,000 and \$1,500", tom's guide, 2024

and the fee is not really expensive. For example, the fee is 990 yen for basic plan on Netflix, 990 yen for standard plan on Disney+, and 1026 yen on Hulu. If people continue being users for only a short period of time, it can be said that they should not buy a TV. In particular, they have to make a new contract to watch more programs such as BS or CS. This is one of the biggest differences that programs on streaming services can be watched anywhere, anytime, and with any devices including smartphones, tablet computers, and laptops.<sup>14</sup> Even if they want to watch outside their house, they do not need to bring anything. Also, when people want to cancel the streaming plan, they can just do it online, while they have a lot of things to cancel on cable TV because it has to be taken away from the house. The streaming services tend to stream popular or famous programs, but there are several genres of programs on cable TV regardless of its popularity. This means that the whole family can enjoy programs together with cable TV while streaming services are usually watched individually.

In conclusion, there are many differences between watching programs on cable TV and on streaming services such as variety of contents, the amount of advertisements, costs, and ease of access. In my opinion, streaming services are really convenient for especially young people because of the reasons mentioned above. However, cable TV also has many benefits so I think they will continue to be used together in the future, too. People should choose how to watch, depending on the situation after understanding each advantage.

### III

Cable TV seems to be becoming minor. It lost around 20 million subscribers from 2019 to 2024 and that trend is continuing in recent years,<sup>15</sup> even though cable TV used to be the dominant tool for people to access news and enjoy with family at their home until a few years

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<sup>14</sup> mogul, "What Are The Benefits Of Using Streaming Platforms?", mogul, 2024

<sup>15</sup> Brooke Gaines, "Is Cable TV Dying? (The Truth)", evoca.tv, 2025

ago. According to a survey, nearly 50 percent of people in all age groups watched cable TV less than once a week in 2022.<sup>16</sup> It is basically thought that that is because of streaming services including Netflix, Amazon Prime, and Disney+, which are more efficient for most people but there are also other causes of this change. In this essay, I will discuss why cable TV viewership is currently reducing that much from three aspects.

First of all, as it was mentioned in the introduction earlier, widespread use of streaming services is the main reason why cable TV is becoming uncommon. In fact, the share of streaming grew from 34.8 percent in 2022 to 37.5 percent in 2023, while the share of cable TV declined from 34.4 percent in 2022 to 29.8 percent in 2023.<sup>17</sup> This is because there are many advantages of streaming. For example, you can watch whatever, wherever and whenever you want, while TV has a schedule of when and what to broadcast everyday. Each streaming service has around 2 to 3 thousands of shows<sup>18</sup> including foreign shows that you cannot watch in Japan, and also, you can add your favorite shows to “watch later” and watch different shows with your family by using your own devices at the same time. Therefore, streaming services are becoming major as the number of benefits of streaming are more than that of cable TV. It is said that streaming is more significant than broadcast and cable media now and will continue to grow.<sup>19</sup>

Secondly, the increase of entertainment including Social Networking Services is also one of the causes. As you see many people using SNS on a daily basis everywhere, there were 5.24 billion users around the world at the start of January 2025, which is 63.9 percent of the total global population<sup>20</sup>. One survey suggests that people spend roughly 14 percent of their waking

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<sup>16</sup> Thomas Reese, “Cable TV Statistics (2025) - Subscribers & Streaming Data”, evoca.tv, 2025

<sup>17</sup> Thomas Reese, “Cable TV Statistics (2025) - Subscribers & Streaming Data”, evoca.tv, 2025

<sup>18</sup> Travis Clark, Will Gendron, “Apple TV+, Disney+, and Hulu recently raised prices. Here are the streaming services that give the most bang for your buck”, BUSINESS INSIDER, 2024

<sup>19</sup> Tim Bajarin, “The Future Of Media: Streaming Dominates”, Forbes, 2024

<sup>20</sup> DATAREPORTAL, “GLOBAL SOCIAL MEDIA STATISTICS”, DATAREPORTAL, date unknown

lives using SNS<sup>21</sup>. These facts show that people are obsessed with SNS not with TV. For instance, YouTube, which is the most used SNS, provides many genres of shows including self-produced short dramas for the whole world and can be used anywhere with their phones. People are already satisfied with only those contents.

Lastly, the other reason is that viewers feel program contents are becoming unexciting and overly cautious. These days, producers tend to play it safe and it results in a similar format, predictable story, and less bold ideas because of concerns over criticism and strict compliance regulations such as power, sexual harassment, and sexual, violent expressions<sup>22</sup>. This causes shows on TV to provide one-sided information while SNS gives thoughts from several perspectives. YouTube, for example, provides a lot of videos that are unique and free. Also, most of the videos are made based on current trends and youth culture, and they are showing more “real” aspects compared to TV programs. That is why people feel those contents are more exciting, useful, and familiar.

In conclusion, the decline in the number of people who use cable TV can be attributed to the growth of streaming services and entertainment, and changes of TV contents. It can be said that the demand for cable TV decreased with the emergence of more convenient and interesting services. As these shifts continue to change, cable TV will be even more minor in the future. In my view, it will not disappear completely but it is sure that services including streaming and SNS are major sources of entertainment for modern people.

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<sup>21</sup> DATAREPORTAL, “GLOBAL SOCIAL MEDIA STATISTICS”, DATAREPORTAL, data unknown

<sup>22</sup> Osamu Kato, “Thinking about the era of emphasis on compliance In order not to walk the "road that came one day”, MO民放online, 2024

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## Sustainable Societies

### I

In the past few decades, many countries have become more cosmopolitan through trading products between each country, communication, and exchange of information.<sup>1</sup> It allows us to access the international community and enable us to work in foreign countries. In contrast, prompting globalisation has crucial disadvantages for the environment, for instance, increasing the opportunity to exchange technology promotes the production of plastic commodities and emits a large amount of carbon dioxide.<sup>2</sup> Plastics are mostly made from coal and generate not only carbon dioxide but also other harmful substances into the atmosphere. It eventually leads to global warming and possibly destroys the ecosystem. In fact, many wild animals, including polar bears, have lost their habitats and are at risk of extinction because of carbon dioxide from human activities. In this essay, I will compare the environmental impact of manufacturing plastic products between Japan and the UK and consider an effective system to maintain the environment.

Predominantly, Japan is known for its environmental consciousness and cleanliness, however, it is facing the waste of plastic severely in recent years.<sup>3</sup> Japan produces approximately 9 million tons of plastic waste annually and more than 40% occupy disposable plastic, such as packaging and food containers. It is one of the crucial issues that destroy the ecology and most of them are thrown into the ocean. Most of them remain in the ocean permanently without being decomposed. Many animals accidentally intake plastic, and in the worst case, humans may eat

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<sup>1</sup> Uri Dadush and William Shaw, “Globalisation, Labor markets, and inequality”, CarnegieEndowment for International Peace, February 2, 2012.

<sup>2</sup> United Nations Environment Program, Chemicals in Plastics: A Technical Report, May 3, 2023.

<sup>3</sup> Inemesit Uk panah, “10 Countries Producing Most Plastic Waste”, GreenMatch, March 13, 2024.

the fish. Governments should regulate throwing plastic into the ocean immediately. The current proportion of recycling waste is 19.9%, hitting a lower rate compared with other advanced countries. It refers to the large amount of plastic and not distinguished barn with burnable garbage. Japan emitted 11.42 million metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent from waste incineration.<sup>4</sup> In 2024, more than 46300 species of wild animals are classified as “Highly Endangered” on the red list of extinction and one of the main causes is carbon dioxide.<sup>5</sup>

In relation to the UK, it is estimated that the production of plastic covers more than five million tonnes annually, and only about a quarter is recycled. The government attempted the single-use ban and charges for bags at supermarkets.<sup>6</sup> Statistically, the proportion of recycling plastic increased gradually between 2012 and 2021, successfully rising by 19%. In 2024, more than 61% of plastics will be recycled. There is a tendency to use paper rather than plastic and it contributes to lessening the usage of plastic. Additionally, the UK started to avoid using them for packages compared with Japan. In Japan, most shops and supermarkets tend to have packages and it comes from hospitality. In contrast, the UK prompts people to bring their bags and it helps companies to get rid of the packaging commodities, such as fruits. It is ultimately connected to making a sustainable society. In addition, the UK started to invent plastic packages which are made of biodegradable and compostable materials.

In conclusion, there are similar policies to reduce the usage of plastic and also differences from garbage distinguishing systems. However, in my opinion, we need to combine both ideas and consider more effective ways to increase the rate of recycling plastic. We produce too much plastic and currently, it is essential to focus on not only decreasing the production but also the

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<sup>4</sup> WWF Japan, “Impact of global warming on wildlife”, WWF Japan, June 12, 2024.

<sup>5</sup> “Plastic Waste Facts and Statistics”, Business Waste, date unknown.

<sup>6</sup> Bruna Alves, “Recycling rate of plastic packaging waste in the United Kingdom from 2012 to 2021”, Statista, February 29, 2024

rate of recycling. Plastics are made from coal and eventually, it can promote resource conservation and create a sustainable society. Additionally, governments should make a law that prevents single-use and promotes using paper instead of plastic. As the population is expected to increase, people must consider the balance between usage and recycling rates.

## II

Nowadays, the amount of plastic waste over the globe has increased dramatically and is threatening animals' lives and our society.<sup>7</sup> Statistically, over one million seabirds and 100,000 marine animals die because of plastic pollution annually. Plastic has been introduced into various industries because of its inexpensive price and durability.<sup>8</sup> However, excessive production and usage of plastic provoked serious stagnation in implementing a sustainable society. It is the radical issue of environmental pollution and facilitates increasing plastic waste quantity.<sup>9</sup> There is an estimated 75 to 199 million tons of plastic waste currently remaining in the ocean by 2024.<sup>10</sup> According to the United Nations, the 12th goal of SDGs, “Responsible consumption and production”, refers to the actions aimed at solving this problem, and there is a lack of awareness around the world. In this essay, I will analyze how plastic waste affects sustainable development and present some factors.

It is evident that the chain of events for the manufacturing and disposal of plastic seriously affects the possibility of making a sustainable society. In most cases, producing plastic consumes huge amounts of fossil fuels such as coal and natural gas, and massive energy and water resources are not only consumed but also emit greenhouse gases into the atmosphere.<sup>11</sup> It is

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<sup>7</sup> SAS, “Shocking ocean plastic statistics: The threat to marine life, the ocean and humanity”, Brittany ferries, date unknown

<sup>8</sup> Tony R. Wolker, “Plastics and the UN sustainable developments goal”, Science direct, April 15, 2021

<sup>9</sup> SAS, “Shocking ocean plastic statistics: The threat to marine life, the ocean and humanity”, Brittany ferries, date unknown

<sup>10</sup> United Nations, “Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns”, United Nations, September 25, 2015

<sup>11</sup> Kayla Vasarhelyi, “The impact of plastic on climate change”, Environmental Center, December 15, 2023

estimated that the usage of these materials and transportation to plastic factories emit 1.5 to 12.5 million metric tons of greenhouse gases. Furthermore, at the disposal stage, plastics that are not properly disposed flow into the landfills and natural environment. It is eventually related to the deterioration of soil and water quality. In addition, the majority of them are assumed to be disposable from the design stage and it diminishes the likelihood of recycling and reuse.<sup>12</sup> Around the world, 1 million plastic bottles are purchased every minute, while 500 billion single-use plastic bags are used worldwide every year. For instance, specific products made of multi-layered packaging and combined materials are complicated to separate and reuse in contemporary technologies. In general, these tend to be discarded ultimately. These design constraints are regarded as an enormous obstacle to promoting a circular economy. Additionally, the distribution of plastic waste is imbalanced geographically, particularly in developing nations, and facing the lack of insufficient waste treatment infrastructure. In these countries, citizens are more likely to dump in illegal places and inappropriate dumps are rampant. These circumstances refer to the inequality of global resource management and imply that these are crucial issues requiring international cooperation. From these perspectives, all nations must reconsider the current plastic cycle and prompt comprehensive improvement of product design, plastic waste administration, and recycling technologies.<sup>13</sup>

The plastic problem indicates the model of massive production and consumption in the past few decades and is deeply involved in stagnating social and economic development. This problem symbolizes the long-term issue of trade-off between economic growth and environmental development.<sup>14</sup> There is a stereotype that recycled materials and alternative

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<sup>12</sup> United Nations, "Our planet is choking on the plastic", UN environmental programmer, date unknown

<sup>13</sup> OECD, "Plastic pollution is growing relentlessly as waste management and recycling fall short, says OECD", OECD, date unknown

<sup>14</sup> Doug Woodring, "Recycled plastic: There's market demand, but where's the supply?", TRELLIS, December 2, 2020

materials tend to be disadvantageous in price competitiveness in the global market compared with the high demand for cheap prices and the multi-functionality of plastic. Consequently, this theory is still deeply rooted in the obstacle of economic policy and the government needs to struggle with it immediately.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, social custom is also prompting the dependence on plastic. Particularly, it is associated with the most consumer action that seeks convenience and savings. The majority of plastic is likely to be dumped in a short period. In the past years, most corporations needed to accept their consumer's demands and design disposable products to be more competitive, being an impediment to making a circular economy. For instance, food packaging and medical applications are in high demand from hygiene and convenience perspectives, and eventually, pressure on the waste management system. In addition, geographically, there is a huge disparity in plastic management system ability between developed nations and developing countries.<sup>16</sup> In developing countries, most plastics are disposed of inadequately because of the underdeveloped waste treatment infrastructure. They are ultimately thrown into the oceans and rivers.<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, many developed nations export plastic commodities to those countries and it also boosts environmental pollution and takes a serious toll on the fishing industries. Also, the inexpensive price of fossil fuel from specific countries that are well known for having abundant quantities of coal distracts the entry of emerging technologies and alternative materials into the current markets. Plastic waste is a crucial factor not only environmentally, but also affects socially and economically. We need to redesign the economic incentive, introduce the new restricting system, and educate to attempt to change consumer behavior.

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<sup>15</sup> Alice Mah, "Tackling the corporate roots of plastics crisis", Everyday society, August 3, 2022

<sup>16</sup> Navarro Ferronato, "Waste mismanagement in developing countries: A review of global issues", National library of medicine, March 24, 2019

<sup>17</sup> Philip J.Landrigan, "Human health and ocean pollution", Annals of global health, date unknown

In conclusion, excessive production and consumption of plastic are crucial issues all over the globe and are intertwined with society, economy, and environment. People need to revolute their behavior and must improve the technologies to promote disposal actions, especially in developing countries through investment or aid from developed nations. Additionally, governments can introduce tariffs on plastic commodities from different countries and restrict the usage of fossil fuels, converting them into reusable energies such as solar power and water pressure. These problems became tough to solve and needed to cooperate with governments, corporations, and citizens in all nations.

### III

<sup>18</sup> In contemporary society, over-manufacturing and consuming plastic byproducts cause serious environmental implications, particularly waste disposal. <sup>19</sup> Plastics are privileged for their inexpensiveness and convenience. Most of them are processed for disposable or shingle use products in many situations, notably in the supermarket.<sup>20</sup> These disposals cause contamination of the ocean and soil, having significant impacts on the ecology of wild animals. The demand for innovative approaches that go beyond existing recycling technologies and management methods has been rising to resolve these environmental issues. In this essay, I will propose some effective solutions to the plastic waste problems and examine the challenges associated with their implementations, evaluating the most practical methods.

Excessive manufacturing and consumption of plastic have been widespread due to its convenience and low cost, causing some crucial implications for the environment.<sup>21</sup> Plastics are used in most industries attributable to their low weight and high durability. Additionally, the

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<sup>18</sup>Parker Laura, "The world's plastic pollution crisis, explained", National Geographic, September 23, 2024

<sup>19</sup>Trinidad Audrey, "The hidden cost of convenience: who pays for our single-use plastic addiction?", plastic bank, January 9, 2025

<sup>20</sup>Oi Mariko. "PepsiCo sued by New York state for plastic pollution", BBC, November 16, 2023

<sup>21</sup>Mittal Sidhi, "Study finds that less than 60 companies drive more half of global plastic pollution", edie, April 26, 2024

costs of manufacturing are inexpensive, inducing more corporations to introduce. However, the high proportion of these disposals had unpredictable impacts on the environment, ascribed to their high disposability.<sup>22</sup> It makes plastics exceptionally slow to degrade in the natural environment and carries the risk of long-term ecological persistence.<sup>23</sup> Moreover, there are technical limitations to recycling plastics, especially multi-layered packaging, and some products consist of complex materials, which are difficult to process with current recycling technology.<sup>24</sup> These materials are difficult to sort, and consequently, the majority of them will end up in landfills or be drained away into the natural environment.<sup>25</sup> In addition, consumers have a high dependency rate on these products, which also accelerates their reliance on disposable products. Based on these current situations, it is evident that conventional recycling systems and waste management are insufficient to deal with the circumstances and that radical solutions must be implemented.

These are some effective solutions that will contribute to conserving the environment from the overall plastic waste in the world. The first one is promoting the introduction of bioplastics and institutional aid from the government.<sup>26</sup> Bioplastic indicates the plastic that is made from botanical biomass, such as corn, sugarcane, and potatoes.<sup>27</sup> It also said that it contributes to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions from a carbon cycle perspective. Particularly, PLA and PBS are biodegradable under certain conditions, expected to be an alternative materials that reduce the impact on the environment.<sup>28</sup> The introduction of bioplastic

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<sup>22</sup>Chariot Energy, "How long does it take for plastic to decompose?", Chariot Energy, February 13, 2024

<sup>23</sup>Bridget Reed Morawski, "What are the biggest problems with plastic recycling?", ONE 5C, December 13, 2023

<sup>24</sup>Marta Fava, "Ocean plastic pollution an overview: data and statistics", UNESCO, May 9, 2022

<sup>25</sup>Breagin Riley, "Consumer power in the age of plastics", Kenan institute or private enterprise, April 26, 2023

<sup>26</sup>Samuel Richard, "Bioplastic and their impact on environment", Research and review, October 27, 2022

<sup>27</sup>Samuel Richard, "An investigation of the environmental implications of bioplastics: recent advancements on the development of environmentally friendly plastics solutions", Science direct, March 1, 2024

<sup>28</sup>Samuel Ricahrd, "Implications of consumer orientation towards environmental sustainability on the uptake of bio-based and biodegradable plastic", Science direct, January 11, 2024

is politically promoted based on the “Green Deal” in the EU. After 2021, this obligation has forced some corporations to introduce packaging materials made from renewable resources. In recent decades, a similar institutional policy has been required in Japan and other Asian countries.<sup>29</sup> For instance, prioritizing the use in public procurement can expand the market by organizing the “Green Purchasing Law” which establishes the criteria for biomass content in the requirement. Additionally, the introduction of the subsidy policy and tax benefits for manufacturers can reduce the initial investment risk and slash the costs of manufacturing.<sup>30</sup> However, current bioplastic has low potential to be an alternative compared with petroleum-based products in terms of heat and water resistance. Furthermore, there is no ability to decompose all products in every household, and the local government will be required to fund industrial composting facilities. For these perspectives, in areas where disposal infrastructure has not been developed ahead of the situation will create an environmental burden. It also criticised the large-scale use of material crops, negatively impacting food stability and land use for other purposes.

The second one is the development and commercialised support for the next generation of alternative materials made from natural substances.<sup>31</sup> Nowadays, mycelium, algae, chitosan from insects, and cellulose-based biomaterials are globally renowned for next-generation materials that are completely degradable in the environment. These are renewable resources, exceeding conventional plastics and bioplastics in terms of speed to return to nature and prevent the generation of microplastics. Mycelium materials need a shorter time to grow and are much simpler to produce than others. The carbon emissions are also lower than those of other

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<sup>29</sup>A.N Sarkar, “Green supply chain management: A potential tool for sustainable green marketing”, Research gate, December, 2012

<sup>30</sup>Tian Daphne, “Bioplastics: sustainability in the plastics industry”, Circularise, December 31, 2023

<sup>31</sup>Parkes James, “The dezzen guide to bio-based materials in architecture, design and interiors”, dezeen, December 9, 2021

counterparts, and applications for packaging materials, packaging cushioning materials, and constructing interior materials are ongoing. To implement this technology in extensive areas, some research and experimentation by the corporation is essential, and the government and council need to aid in the meantime with subsidies, especially aiding supply chain development. For instance, the product certification system, which is officially recognized by the institution, is also essential to ensure the credibility of eco-friendly products. However, these materials are still in research and innovative development is required to invent products with the same durability and functionality as current industrial materials. Additionally, the initial investment cost and experimental costs are costly, making it difficult for small companies to introduce these materials. Many of them have unstable supply systems, price fluctuations, and difficulties in mass production will limit commercial development.

The third one is the introduction of plastic cycle technology based on the chemical cycle. In recent years, the chemical cycles that include thermal decomposition and gasification are more renowned than the physical cycle, which mostly indicates mechanical crushing.<sup>32</sup> For instance, converting plastic into synthetic oil through thermal decomposition, and reusing it as a naphtha is working in some countries, including Japan.<sup>33</sup> Also, introducing the latest technology enables processing of PET byproducts through oxygen decomposition, enabling them to use it again. This technology is expected to dramatically improve recycling rates due to the innovative change that was not processed in the past. However, this technology is concerned about its high cost and energy consumption, requiring a comprehensive judgment of environmental impact based on LCA evaluation. Furthermore, the accuracy of the treatment process, including quality management of recovered plastics and removal of foreign matter, will also significantly affect the

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<sup>32</sup>MCG, “Chemical recycling through plastic to oil conversion”, MITSUBISHI chemical group, November 29, 2024

<sup>33</sup>Author unknown, “BP’s new technology to enable circularity for unrecyclable PET plastic waste”, bp, October 24, 2019

quality of the final products. At this stage, the commercialisation of this technology remains a challenge, and the government and other institutions need to support it through subsidies and public investment.

To conclude, plastic waste has a multifaceted impact on the environment, such as global warming, destruction of the ecology, the expansion of economic costs, and exacerbating social inequality. To deal with these issues, widespread use of bioplastic, the development of alternative materials from botany are required. Additionally, educational institutions also need to change consumers' approach to change their traditions. However, these methods are still difficult to implement with contemporary technology and economic, social limitations. Among these, the implementation of advanced recycling technologies and the development of institutional and economic infrastructure to support them. I evaluated that the introduction of green technology, including chemical recycling, has the biggest potential to accelerate resource recycling. To implement this, subsidies from governments and other institutions are integral, consumers also need to change their approaches. In order to make a sustainable society, we need to minimize the environmental impact while promoting these policies, and we need to transition from a linear economy to a circular economy.

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## What is music?

### I

Recently, more and more people are listening to music.<sup>1</sup> There are many different types of music. There are countless songs, from uplifting pop songs that young people love to calming classical music. Music is created using instruments and sung by people. I believe that lyrics are written from the composer's thoughts. If you listen carefully to the lyrics, there are some songs that really touch your heart. I think music has great power. There are a few reasons why I think so. In this essay, I will talk in detail about music.

Music is an art form using sound. Music is a universal culture found in all human societies, but its definition varies from culture to culture. Music is said to have existed since prehistoric times. A "genre" of music is a style or form of music. Since ancient times, music has been closely related to the lives of many societies through entertainment, religion, and rituals, and has produced many distinctive forms and styles. A genre of music is not only the style or form of music that can be heard today, but also a clue to its origin and history. Modern music is often a complex synthesis of various genres.

Next, I researched the history of pop music and the history of classical music, which I like. The history of popular music dates back to the immigration to America in the 17th century. When immigration began in earnest, theater music such as musicals by white people became popular. In addition, spirituals, blues and gospel were started by black people from Africa. At the end of the 19th century, blues was fused with Western music and developed into jazz, which is characterized by swing, improvisation and polyrhythms. In the 1920s, country music, which is a

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<sup>1</sup> "Country Music Listeners Are Having a Moment." TSE Entertainment.

fusion of blues, spirituals and Appalachian folk music, became popular, and in the 1940s, rhythm and blues, which is characterized by electronic instruments and intense rhythm sessions, and in the 1950s, soul music, which is a fusion of R&B and gospel, was born. Furthermore, in the mid-1950s, rock and roll, which is a fusion of country, blues, R&B, etc., appeared, and in the 1970s, the hip-hop movement appeared.<sup>2</sup> The history of classical music can be traced back to around the 8th century. First, around this time, Gregorian chant, a Christian hymn, and polyphonic music were born and developed, and in the 15th century, Renaissance music was established in the Flanders region of the Duchy of Burgundy. In the 16th century, full-scale instrumental music developed, opera was born, and court music flourished. This is called Baroque music. Music before this is often called early music. Later, in the mid-18th century, music spread to the general public, and developed into classical music, which placed emphasis on "form" and "harmony." It was also around this time that music began to be generally viewed as an art. In the 19th century, there was a shift to romantic music, which placed emphasis on "expression," and national schools of music that incorporated folk songs from various countries were born. Around the 20th century, modern music was born, such as impressionist music, which expresses itself through "mood" and "atmosphere," and music that eliminated the restrictions of harmony and key, and after World War II, it developed into free music called contemporary music.<sup>3</sup>

In conclusion, music is loved all over the world. There are songs that have existed since ancient times and songs that have been composed by mixing old music. This evolution has led to various genres of music. I think it's very fun for people to talk about music that they like in different genres. I think it leads to communication.

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<sup>2</sup> "popular music." Britannica. November 4, 2024.

<sup>3</sup> "A brief history of classical music." Gramophone. February 24, 2023.

## II

In recent years, the number of people listening to music has increased.<sup>4</sup> The average time people listen to music per day is about 50 minutes, with those in their 20s listening for over an hour. When asked how often they usually listen to music, 37.7% answered "almost every day." This is especially true for those in their 20s, with 61.5% listening to music almost every day. In this essay, I will go into detail about the reasons for the increase in the number of people listening to music.

I think the main reason for this is the evolution of technology and the ease of access to music. With the spread of smartphones and wireless earphones, we have an environment where we can enjoy music anytime, anywhere.<sup>5</sup> The advent of earphones has fundamentally changed our music experience. Previously, we needed large devices such as radios, stereos, and CD players to listen to music, but with the spread of earphones, music has become personal and can be enjoyed anytime, anywhere. As long as you have earphones, you can easily listen to your favorite music on the train during your commute, between work, while exercising, or while doing housework. In particular, when combined with a smartphone, you can access a huge music library and streaming services, bringing you much closer to music.

With the advent of music distribution services such as Spotify and Apple Music, it has become easy to listen to a huge amount of music.<sup>6</sup> Previously, you needed a dedicated music player or CDs, but now you can access a huge music library with just one smartphone. This service, which allows you to listen to unlimited music for a few hundred yen a month, has dramatically lowered the barrier to music. It has become easy for the younger generation to come

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<sup>4</sup> "People Are Listening to Music More than Ever Before" MUSQ. February 13, 2024

<sup>5</sup> "Headphones or Loudspeakers? How Technology has Changed the Way We Appreciate Music" SOUND OF LIFE. 17 Nov, 2022

<sup>6</sup> "Music streaming services: understanding the drivers of customer purchase and intention to recommend" Pud Med Central. Aug 13, 2021

into contact with new artists and music genres. The younger generation in particular is discovering new music through social media and YouTube, widening the scope of their music experience. The rise in music listeners has also been fuelled by the ease with which people can discover music that suits their tastes through viral videos and music apps.

Music is no longer just entertainment, but has become an indispensable part of everyday life.<sup>7</sup> The situations in which people listen to music have become more diverse, such as while commuting, doing housework, or exercising. Music is no longer just entertainment, but has become a part of everyday life. This is one of the reasons why the number of people listening to music has increased.

In conclusion, music has become an indispensable part of our lives. In this way, the evolution of technology and music distribution services has greatly increased the number of people listening to music, which is a characteristic of the modern era. And music, which can be used in a variety of situations, has become a source of comfort for us.

### III

Recently, I feel that music is being used in many situations. For example, when you go to a restaurant or supermarket, there are songs playing in the store, and music is always used on social media. Music is a part of our daily lives, and we listen to it every day without fail. Therefore, I think it is absolutely necessary in our daily lives. Music has many elements that are necessary for the human body. In this essay, I will talk in detail about the power that music has on people.

In an experiment conducted at a supermarket, it was found that customers moved 17% slower in the store when slower background music was played than when faster background

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<sup>7</sup> "Music Is An Essential Part Of Our Life" Chhayant.

music was played, and sales increased by 38%.<sup>8</sup> In an experiment conducted at a restaurant, it was found that when slow background music was played, customers ate their meals slower, and although the amount of food they ate remained the same, the amount of alcohol and drinks they ordered increased, resulting in increased sales.<sup>9</sup> The effects of playing music are essential elements for creating an atmosphere in the store and providing a comfortable space for customers. The image induction effect of background music creates a sense of calm and luxury in the store, and the auditory masking effect maintains a comfortable environment by covering the noise in the store with background music. What is medically known is that music affects the autonomic nervous system, changing heart rate and blood pressure, and bringing about effects such as excitement, sedation, and relaxation.<sup>10</sup> At the same time, it is known to affect the state of mind, activating emotions, perception, and cognition. It is not the music itself that has an effect, but the memories and emotions recalled by listening to music.

There are several ways to use music in your life. The first is to listen to music as part of your morning routine, which I think will help you start the day with a positive attitude. The second is that I thought that playing your favorite music while cooking or cleaning would increase your work efficiency. Finally, the third is that listening to music while commuting, traveling, or sleeping can help you relax, and listening to your favorite music in between work and study can reduce stress and refresh you. However, depending on the type and volume of music, it may also reduce the quality of your sleep, so be careful.<sup>11</sup> Similar to this story, here are three ways to incorporate music into your daily life. The first is to choose a song that matches your mood. Starting with a song that resonates with your feelings will help you change your

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<sup>8</sup> "The effect of background music on consumer behaviour in a retail environment." Bachelor Thesis

<sup>9</sup> "How Does Background Music Affect Dining Duration, Tips and Bill Amounts in Restaurants? A Field Experiment" PMC Dec 13, 2024

<sup>10</sup> "Effects of music on the cardiovascular system" PMC Jul 5, 2021

<sup>11</sup> "5 benefits of starting your morning by listening to music" Times Entertainment Feb 14, 2024

mood more smoothly. The second is to share it with your family. Listening to classical music together as a parent and child can share a sense of unity and a moving experience. The third is to experience live music. Live music gives you a special sense of unity and emotion, so it is also effective as a stimulus for your daily life.<sup>12</sup>

In conclusion, music is not just entertainment, but a powerful tool that has a deep impact on the human mind and body. By incorporating it into your daily life, you can enjoy a wide range of benefits, from reducing stress to improving concentration. It also has the power to shake human emotions and heal the heart. Elements of music such as rhythm, melody, and harmony activate brain activity and move our hearts. Music has the potential to contribute to our mental and physical health, such as relieving stress, unleashing creativity, and promoting communication. I believe that these are the powers that music gives to people.

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<sup>12</sup> "Do you feel more connected to the song when the lyrics are known to you?" Quara

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